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RB78.366

TOPSAIL-SHEET BLOCKS;

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THE NAVAL FOUNDLING.

BY

MATTHEW HENRY BARKER,

AUTHOR OF

'TOUGH YARNS,' 'THE OLD SAILOR,'

ETC., ETC.

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BEDFORD STREET, STRAND.

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CHAPTER I.

'I am the dependent on your bounty, no less than the child of your care. I owe you much—much in duty, but still more in affection. 'Twas you who held out to me the sheltering, protecting arm of a parent in the first desolate hour of my childhood's sorrow.'

'Thou art fatherless, and therefore I would give you counsel; motherless, and being so, I would fain keep such a vigilant eye above you, that you should not need a mother's watchfulness—her love her care.

MISS E. L. MONTAGU.

'GIVE way cheerily, my lads! here's a rough night coming on, and the tide 'll be setting in strong flood directly. One half-hour's bold stretch-out with the tail of the ebb will save a dog-watch of hard pulling against the current! Who the devil's that catching crabs?'

'It's Jem here, and he's almost carried away the upright of my back,' was the response.

'I tell you what it is, Jem,' said the first speaker rather sternly, 'you've been coming it too strong, I'm thinking. I loves a taste of the stuff myself; but d—— it, I say, it's too bad to be sucking the monkey all weathers, particularly when a fellow's on duty.'

'I arn't in the least tosticated,' hiccuped Jem, once more catching his oar in the water; 'but I'm bless'd if this here paddle knows what it's about: the chap as sarved it out from the dock-yard shoved it in among the capstan-bars.'

'I know better than that, Jem,' returned the other; 'the barge's oars are as good as ever were turned out of hand, seeing as I picked them myself. But there's a lump o' grogginess at one end o' yours that I'll allow ud be just as well away.'

'S'pose I am a little slued,' responded Jem, scarcely able to keep his seat, 'I arn't a bit the more drunk for that! It's the wind in my stomach as blows me out, and makes me roll like an East Ingeeman running down a trade.'

'You'll be getting blow'd up as well as blow'd out afore long,' said the first. 'There you go again—another crab, and be d—— to you!'

'There you're out in your reck'ning, shipmate!' exclaimed Jem, more assured, 'and it's a proof, if so be as proof was wanting, that I am quite sober. It's Jack Moberley as catch'd that crab. What makes you alays fix on me, seeing as all hands are tarr'd with the same brush?'

'I'm afeard so, Jem,' uttered the first speaker in a tone of vexation, 'I'm afeard so, or you'd never let the boat move along like a dock-yard lighter, or one o' your Lunnun river barges. But come, lads, for your own sakes give way; for I'm d—— if I bear up to-night, come on it whatsomever will.'

'We *are* giving way,' responded Jack Moberley, who was pretty much in the same condition as Jem. 'Don't be grumbling there like a loose fid in the heel of a topmast: we *have* been taking a pull o' the jib-halliards, and what then? You're as fond o' splicing the main-brace as any on us.'

'I don't deny it, Jack,' answered the first in a more quiet tone; 'but d—— the lubber as can say that Will Blocks ever look'd like a wet swab on duty. Can't you get drunk at proper times, when you've got a just right to do it? and that's when you're on liberty, and may sarve out to yourself just what allowance you please. But d—— my ould tarry trowsers if it arn't too much of a good thing to be non-compass on sarvice!'

'You're always running foul of a poor devil if he happens to soak his biscuit a little more than usual,' said Jem; 'but I don't care a tinker's d—— for you, and you may tell the first leftenant if you like.'

'If I was alongside o' you, Jem, I'd just punch your pumpkin for that,' returned Will Blocks angrily. 'Whoever know'd me carry tales, or curry favour with any officer whatsomever? But suppose the skipper had taken it into his calculations to have gone off with us to-night, and it was all but a turn-up that he didn't, then I'm thinking you'd have cotch'd somut more nor crabs in the morning, that's all. I wants you to get to your hammocks; but if you prefars exercise to rest, why then chop water as long as you likes: it's easier steering than pulling.'

Such was the conversation in the barge of the *Alfred* seventy-four, Captain William Bayne, then lying in Cawsand Bay under sailing orders, as she was pulling out about nine o'clock in the evening from Mount Wise, in Stonehouse Pool, to proceed to the ship. They were a fine hearty set of fellows composing that boat's crew; the very pride of the British navy; the Tom Pipes and Jack Ratlins of Smollett's days; men that feared God, whose might and power they had so often witnessed in their favour, and defied the devil because he was an enemy. But the fact was, the ship's company had been paid six

months' wages, and a very handsome share of prize-money, preparatory to their departure for the West Indies; and, as a matter of course, they spent extravagantly for the purpose of getting rid of it. The writer of old says, 'Riches make unto themselves wings and flee away:' but the riches of seamen are not of an aërial character; they resolve themselves into a more liquid element, known by the name of grog. Various are the conjectures from whence the etymology of this word is derived. Some ascribe it to old Benbow, who wore what was termed a grogram jacket, and hence obtained the name of Old Grog. In some of his daring actions he refreshed his men with rum and water, which ever afterwards retained the title. Others assert, that a planter of Jamaica wishing to send a puncheon of real good stuff to George the Second, marked upon the head G. R. O. G. for 'George Rex, Old Gemakee.' Another anecdote refers to the well-known act of 'tapping the governor.' Monsieur Guillaume Roussel, Governor of Guadaloupe, died and was shipped in a cask of rum for Europe. On the puncheon was painted 'Guillaume Roussel, obit. Guadaloupe;' and round the lead that was nailed over the bung, the initials G. R. O. G. On her passage the vessel was captured by the English; and the jolly Jacks, without knowing the actual contents, soon sucked the governor dry. When they appeared rather out of order before the officer, his general exclamation was, 'What, you've been foul of the "grog" cask again!' Whatever was the origin, certain it is that no other language has any term applicable to it by way of translation. I remember once hearing the following attempt at explanation: A ship's chaplain was commenting in one of his sermons upon the words, 'Oh that a man should put an enemy into his mouth to *steal* away his brains!' and during his discourse he frequently styled spirituous liquor 'the rogue;' but being a North-countryman, the burr in his throat gave the word the sound of 'grogue,' which was seized hold of with avidity by the tars, and applied to their favourite beverage. At all events, the barge's crew of the *Alfred* had been partaking freely of the generous *neck-tar*, and their excess would probably have brought some of them to the gangway, had their captain, who was a kind-hearted man, but a rigid disciplinarian, embarked with them. As it was, they had reached the dogged devil-may-care sort of feeling that rendered them either unwilling or unable to exert their strength, and ten o'clock on a tempestuous night in October found them outside that famed fortified rock in Plymouth Sound, which seamen assert was the first British land made by the celebrated navigator on his return from his first voyage round the world, and has ever since borne the name of Drake's Island. A strong south-wester had set in with the flood; the sea came rolling across the mouth of the Channel with the whole weight of the Atlantic at its back; and as the boat just held sufficient way through the water to remain nearly stationary, the spray broke over the bows, and scattered its saline particles right fore and aft, to the great damping of the energies of the crew.

The individual who had assumed some degree of consequence and command was Will Blocks, the captain's coxswain, a splendid specimen of the man-of-war's man in the olden time;—he was about thirty years of age, a fine-looking fellow, and considered the most trustworthy as well as the best seaman in the ship. He was deeply mortified at the intoxication of the bargemen, who kept grumbling because he would not bear up for the harbour or run back into Stonehouse Pool;—his determination was fixed to get on board that night, as he had a rather important letter from the captain to deliver to the first lieutenant. It was extremely dark, almost approaching to downright impervious blackness, so that it was impossible to see beyond a boat-hook's length of the bows; when, suddenly, the barge's stem struck against something, which proved to be a small shore-boat, that appeared to have broken away from her moorings, and was drifting about at random.

'Boat ahoy!' shouted Will, but no answer was returned. 'Now, lads, if you'd been a-mind to have stretched out, you might have saved some poor devil his means of livelihood, by taking the punt in tow: as it is, shove her off there, for'ud—the blessing of some ould sowl or other will be lost to you—there, shove her off, and give the barge steerage-way, at any rate.'

The bowman arose from his thwart, boat-hook in hand, to obey the order; whilst some of the crew who pulled the after-oars, touched with a generous feeling towards the owner of the punt, on which perhaps depended the maintenance of a family, remonstrated with the coxswain, and promised 'to stretch out if he'd take the vessel in tow.' At this moment the shrill cry of infancy was heard upon the breeze, and the bowman, with a thrill of superstitious dread, immediately stepped back into his original position.

'What the blazes is that noise?' inquired the coxswain, a strong tinge of the supernatural mingling with the humane impulse of his nature.

'It's a sucking himp, I'm thinking,' replied the bowman, shoving off the punt as she swung with the current more alongside.

'Sucking devil!' responded the coxswain scornfully, as the feeble wail again came down the blast. 'Hould on there, for'ud!'

But the bowman was too much terrified at 'himps' to comply; he gave the diminutive vessel a vigorous launch; the seamen, catching the infection of fear from his exclamation and conduct, stoutly plied their oars, and the barge hastily shot ahead, whilst the punt was borne away by the wind and tide.

Again rose that infantile cry, as if some child of sorrow had been rocked to sleep in its frail cradle by the billows, and the shock of collision had awoke it from its slumbers.

'If it arn't a babby, I'm d——!' shouted Will, rising up in the stern-sheets, and fixing his keen eyes upon the receding object. 'Back

your paddles, men—back of all!' but the crew, wrought upon by influences which are not to be easily defined, hesitated to obey, and the tiny vessel would have soon been lost sight of in the gloom, but for the piercing eye of the coxswain, who never suffered it to escape his observation. 'Back, I say, men!' he again shouted. 'Why, you lubberly fools! would you leave a young babby on such a night as this to perish? Back of all, and save your manhood!'

The men reluctantly complied, Jack Moberley declaring that 'it was nothing more than one of ould Davy's young uns enjoying the breeze;' but in a few seconds the cock-tail was on the barge's quarter, the coxswain sprang into it, and almost instantly resumed his station at the helm with an infant in his arms. He took a turn with the shore-boat's penter to the mainsheet belaying-pin in the barge, and shouted, 'Now, lads, if you'll pull neither to please God nor devil, yet for the sake o' humanity, and this here innocent babby, go your hardest, like sons o' thunder!'

This brief and characteristic appeal had its due effect,—the tars bent sturdily to their oars, and away flew the barge, in spite of all resistance from the gale above or the spring-tide below: their generosity was called into operation, all the better feelings of their nature were excited in favour of infancy; nor was there wanting that stimulus which induces a tar to believe that in succouring the helpless he is logging a meritorious act in his own favour against the last great day of general muster. Still they passed their rough jokes on the event, as their sinewy arms frequently brought the bows of their favourite boat nearly buried in the opposing waves; but, light and buoyant, she again rose, dashing through the foam, and throwing the spray hither and thither like a finback at play.

The coxswain carefully wrapped the infant in his jacket, and pressing it closely to his breast, the warmth soon tranquillised its wailings, and it sank into quiet slumber. It would be impossible to describe the many thoughts, wishes, and schemes, that occupied the mind of Will Blocks, as he held the little stranger in his arms and felt it nestle towards him;—all originated in the kindest intentions, arising from the noblest attributes of the human heart. Will's early life had been one of hardship; his parents were dead, he knew of no relations in the world, but he had amassed a very handsome sum in prize-money, and he formed a resolution that should no one reclaim the child, henceforward it should be his, and he would do his best endeavours to provide for it, whether it should turn out either a boy or a girl.

From the moment of their rescuing the infant, the sky began to clear, and the wind to lull, which was seized hold of by the bargemen as a token that the act was approved off by ONE whose eye never slumbers nor sleeps,—the stars peeped forth through their fleecy curtains, and were hailed with pleasure, and the coincidence produced a powerful interest in favour of the helpless being they had saved. It was near midnight, however, before the barge got alongside the seventy-four, and Will carried his still sleeping charge aboard.

'What combustible have you got stowed away there, Will?' inquired the midshipman of the watch.

'It's my own image in waxwork, Muster Burton,' answered the tar; 'and it's just for all the world like a lady's doll—if you pull the string, the eyes will slue round like a compass-card directly.'

'Let's have a look at it, Will,' said the midshipman, laughing; 'bring it to the binnacle-light—it will just do for a beggarlug for the top of the rudder.'

'No, no, Muster Burton, I can't onkiver it to-night, for fear it should catch cowld,' responded the seaman: 'besides, it belongs to the barge's crew; the captain's going to raise upon her—give her a schooner rig, and we've picked up this here consarn for a figure-head; you shall see it in the morning.'

The barge and her tow were passed astern with a stout hawser, and Will went below and deposited his prize, as he called it, in his hammock, where the younker slept profoundly, till aroused by the hands being turned up at four bells in the morning watch to wash decks, etc., when the shrill pipe of the boatswain's mate was responded to by the equally shrill voice of the infant.

'Halloo! Why, Will, surely you arn't ha' found a young 'un in the night!' exclaimed one of his messmates, whose hammock hung near him. 'What colour is it, Will?'

'It's a sandy-grey russet,' answered Will, turning out and quieting the child: 'you see I've a babby at last; and now, Harry, I means to engage you as nurse, for all hands knows you're a precious soaker.'

'Well! I'm blessed if it arn't a right-arnest babby, and no sham!' returned Harry, looking at the infant, which smiled in his face. 'Lord love the creatur'! how it grins, like the top of a beggar's walking-stick; it shall have a share of my grub, anyhow. But where did you get it, Will?'

'We found it sitting astraddle across the mooring-buoy off the dockyard, like Bacchus riding a barrell o' swipes,' replied Will, with a serio-comic countenance; 'and knowing as you were fond o' such playthings, why, I just brought it aboard for you to keep your hand in.'

'Well, it's a rum consarn, anyhow,' uttered Harry. 'Is it a cock or a hen?'

'I'm blessed if I know disactly,' answered the seaman, laughingly; 'but I guess it's a little o' both, Harry, and double-jointed.'

Numerous were the visitors who crowded round the berth to have a look at their young shipmate; nautical wit and jokes abounded, and the new-comer became the principal subject of conversation fore and aft. The first lieutenant was up early, and being informed of the circumstance of an infant being in the ship, he directed that the coxswain should bring it to him on the quarter-deck.

'So, my man, what have you got there?' inquired the officer, as Will, delicately handling the baby with one hand, pulled off his hat with the other.

'It's a young infant, yer honour,' answered the seaman, 'as we picked up in a shore-boat last night.'

'Indeed! that's strange,' returned the lieutenant. 'And what have you done with the boat?'

'It's towing astarn, sir,' replied the seaman, respectfully. 'We ran foul of it—heard the child cry, and so I couldn't, yer honour, leave it, and-——'

'Well, well, I'm not going to find fault, my man. but rather to commend,' said the officer, approvingly: 'but come, let us see the youngster—you've got it wrapped up there like a cock-roach in a thrum-mat.'

'Why, ay, yer honour, I was afeard o' the cowld wind,' answered Will, removing the blankets and wrappers from the child: but in unmuffling it he made a slight mistake, for instead of showing its features to the commanding officer, he commenced at the wrong end.

'Yes, yes, I see it is a boy, by his being lubberly-rigged,' said the laughing lieutenant: 'there, cover it up again.'

This was the first intimation that the worthy seaman had of the sex of the helpless creature he had saved. 'Ax pardon, yer honour,' said Will; 'yer honour must be the best judge as it regards being a boy or a girl, though I dare say the consarn's all ship-shape enough; but that warn't what I meant.' He rectified his error; and as the face of a remarkably fine child, probably about eight months old, was revealed to view, the boatswain exclaimed, 'There, yer honour, now I've slued him eend for eend, and you may take a cast of his countenance.'

'He's a noble fellow, certainly,' said the officer, as the smiling infant stretched out his arms to him. 'Look here, doctor; we've had a family affair in the night.'

'God bless me! you don't say so!—and I not called!' responded the surgeon as he ascended the companion to the quarter-deck. 'And pray whose is it?'

'It's Will's, here,' answered the lieutenant: 'he can tell you all about it.'

The surgeon looked at the infant, and became immediately aware by its age that his messmate was playing off a joke upon him. 'It is a fine child,' said he, 'a very fine child: where did you get it from?'

'Why, the fact is, doctor, that a certain lady, residing you know where, took it yesterday evening to the captain, and told a lamentable tale about desertion, and duty, and affection, and Captain Bayne, to save all further trouble, sent it off to you—here's his letter;' and he produced the letter which Will had brought the night before, and then, fixing his eyes on the child, and quickly shifting them to the surgeon, he added, 'On my life, Sims, there can't be a doubt on the subject—it's the very image of you.'

'Nonsense, nonsense!' uttered the surgeon, a tell-tale rush of blood colouring all his face. 'Where does the baby come from?'

Will would gladly have continued the joke of the commanding officer, but his habitual respect for his superiors at once deterred him, and he briefly related the occurrence.

'And what do you mean to do with the boy?' inquired the lieutenant, when the coxswain had concluded.

'Why, as it regards the matter o' that, yer honour,' returned Will, nibbing the youngster under the chin, as boys do when they feed an unfledged sparrow—'in the regard o' the matter o' that, I thinks it's got a good right to be mine by the articles of law as well as war, seeing he's a good prize; so we must rear him among us in the mess to sarve his Majesty.'

'But you must make some inquiries respecting his friends,' said the commanding officer, smiling at Will's arrangement.

'Friends! yer honour?' returned the tar, in a tone of doubt, as if uncertain that he had heard aright; 'did you say friends?' He looked down on the crowing child. 'Why, then, I'm thinking the poor little fellow's had d—— few of them sarved out to him, anyhow; for what but an infernal rascal would have cast such an innocent as this here upon the wide waters, like a sucking-pig adrift in his mother's trough, on such a night as last night was?'

'But you do not know, my man, what led to his deserted state,' argued the surgeon. 'It is really a pretty child! Are you married, Bill?'

'No, yer honour,' responded the tar, with a good-humoured smile; 'but I arn't the first as has had a babby without the help of the parson.'

Both officers laughed—the jest told—and the surgeon pursued his inquiry. 'Has he no token about him?'

'Why, yes, yer honour,' grumbled Will, 'all's right in the regard of a token; Muster Gilmore says he's got one.'

'I mean, no mark or anything about his clothes that may lead to a knowledge of the persons he belongs to?' explained the doctor.

This led to an investigation. The dress was plain, but good; a small heart in needlework was discovered on the shirt; a coral necklace with a plain gold clasp was round his neck; and in the folds of his frock, between that and the petticoat, was an antique gold ring, or rather signet, having a stag's head with a dagger thrust through the neck as a crest. The shore-boat was very diminutive, with her name, '*The Lovely Sally*,' painted inside her stern.

When Will went for his captain, he respectfully informed him of every particular, and the most diligent inquiries were instituted; but though an owner was found for the boat, who stated that he had hired it to a seafaring-looking man in the afternoon, who said he was going out to fish, yet no tidings whatever could be gained relative to the infant, and Will, after consulting his commander, declared his intention to adopt it as his own. Captain Bayne granted him four-and-twenty hours' leave of absence to make his arrangements, and gave him a letter

of recommendation to a solicitor, with whom he might deposit the articles found upon the person of the child, and who might undertake his guardianship whilst the coxswain was at sea. Will had provided materials, and some of the women on board manufactured suitable apparel, so as to save the clothes the child had on when found.

The coxswain with his messmate, Harry, landed, and being resolved to have everything done ship-shape, they consulted the landlord of the Roaring Boreas, who recommended them, 'As mayhap the youngster hadn't been properly named when he was first launched, by all manner o' means to have him christened afore they went any further.'

This advice was so reasonable and proper, that the tars at once assented to it, and taking the baby away, they started for the church, expecting to find, as was always the case on board, 'some of the officers on duty.' But in this they were disappointed—the church was shut up, and after ineffectually knocking at the doors for about ten minutes, they were turning away to make sail for the Roaring Boreas again, when a middle-aged man, with the most benevolent countenance and mild language inquired, 'What their wishes were?'

'Why, yer honour,' said Will, 'it's in regard o' the babby, seeing as we wants an entry made of his name, that when he comes of proper age so as to be able to larn his duty, we may know what to call him on the ship's books.'

'How is it, my friend, that this child has not been brought for baptism before?' inquired the gentleman, mildly.

'Yer honour?' returned Will, with a look of inquisitiveness, for the word 'baptism' was new to him.

'It should have been christened before this,' said the gentleman. 'But is the mother one of my parishioners? I am the officiating clergyman here.'

'God bless your reverence, howsomever!' exclaimed Will, 'and I'm heartily glad to see you. Harry and I have been hammering away at the doors, in all due respect, though, yer reverence, for ever so long; but as nobody never answered the signal, "Mayhap," thinks I, "this here church arn't in commission, as there's never a soul on the look-out;" and so we were just going to haul our wind out o' this, but your coming alongside has saved us all the trouble of bracing the yards about. As for the mother o' the babby being one o' your what-you-may-call-its, why then, that's more nor I can tell you. All I wants to know, yer reverence—and I axes the question in all due civility and honour—all I wants to know is, whether you'll be so kind as to give the babby a cast of your office?'

'But you come under strange circumstances, my friend,' said the clergyman; 'and though I do not for one moment impugn your motives, yet, as a Christian minister, it becomes my duty to make inquiry why you have brought this child in the *manner* that you have.'

The tars looked at each other, and then at the clergymen, as if sorely perplexed as to his meaning; at last Will seemed to comprehend the difficulty, and answered, 'Is it in regard o' my handling the babby? Oh! then, yer reverence, I arn't had much practice in that 'ere way, seeing as we only picked the youngster up a day or two ago; and nursing, I take it, wants discrimmagement as well as cuckoo-clock making.'

'Only picked the child up a day or two ago!' repeated the clergyman, almost as much puzzled as the seamen; 'what do you mean? But do not let us remain here. Though our professions are different, I being the minister of peace, and you the agents of warfare, yet I love the brave defenders of my country, and shall feel honoured by having them beneath my roof. My house is close at hand; come with me, then—we can see to the christening afterwards.'

With many and repeated thanks they followed their spiritual guide, and entered a comfortable dwelling, where they were greeted by the kind-hearted lady of the minister, who took the child, and fondled it, whilst Will related every occurrence that had taken place, from the starting from Mount Wise with the barge on the night they picked up the infant down to the present moment.

'It is in good truth a most remarkable incident,' said the worthy divine; 'but the hand of Providence is everywhere. You do right, my friend, to have the child named. Pray, are the sponsors ready?'

'Oh yes, yer reverence,' replied the coxswain, lugging out a canvas bag of guineas, 'the 'sponsibles are all ready.'

'No, no, my man, I did not mean that,' returned the clergyman, smiling; 'I mean the godfathers and godmother.' But observing that the seamen did not comprehend him, he explained that the coxswain and his messmate Harry would do to undertake the office of godfathers, but it would be necessary also to have a godmother.

'If you have no objections, my dear,' said Mrs. Hector, 'I will with pleasure act in that capacity to the pretty little fellow. He has not numbered many months, but his history is peculiarly surprising.'

'As you please, my dear,' assented her husband; 'but do not take upon yourself so serious a responsibility without consideration. What do you mean to do with this infant, my friend?'

'Well, then, yer reverence, I must chalk it out a nurse somewhere or other, seeing as we're off to the West Ingees in a few days,' replied Blocks.

'I do not wish to be prying or impertinent, but of course you have sufficient resources?' said the clergyman.'

'Why, no, yer reverence,' answered Will, hesitatingly, 'I carn't say as I have, as I knows of.'

'Who, then, will provide for the child in your absence, my friend?' asked the minister.

'Oh, ay, now I understands,' responded the coxswain, at once comprehending the word 'resources,' and pulling out the captain's letter:

'd'ye see, I've a goodish lot of prize-money, and so I'm going to place the consarn in the hands of the gentleman as is on the back of this here,' showing the direction; 'it's a chit of palaver from Captain Bayne to Muster—Muster—it's a short name.'

'Brief,' said the clergyman, reading the writing. 'I know him, and he truly merits the name of an honest lawyer.'

'But have you no nurse, nor any place to leave the child?' inquired the lady.

'No, yer ladyship, not none in the least,' returned Will. 'But here's Harry and I have got four-and-twenty hours' leave to *derange* matters in; and if yer ladyship could place a couple of tars upon the right tack, why, then, may God A'mighty bless the heart he has placed in yer ladyship's bosom!'

'I think I can manage it for you, with Mr. Hector's sanction,' said the lady, 'and undertake the responsibility too. The child's history has greatly interested me; and it would be a sad pity for him to get into bad hands. But let us have him christened first—then go to Mr. Brief, and settle matters with that gentleman. In the meantime, I will make inquiry for a suitable person to take care of the infant; and you can return here when it suits you.'

'That is so like yourself, my dear,' said the clergyman, placidly and pleased, 'that I cannot raise a single objection. I have sent for the clerk, and everything will soon be in readiness for the service.'

The infant looked about him with great delight, and seemed to notice things in a manner that excited astonishment in the minds of the unsophisticated tars; and Will augured that 'he should some day or other see him a great man.'

'And, I trust, a good one,' added Mr. Hector; 'for there is no true greatness without the corresponding qualities which form the Christian. Providence has thus far favoured him—he has fallen into benevolent hands. And remember, my friends, the voice of unerring wisdom has said, "Forasmuch as ye have done it unto one of these, ye have done it unto me." May the generosity you have manifested on this occasion prove the source of blessing to all.'

In a short time the clerk announced everything prepared; and, the minister's wife carrying the child, they entered the church and proceeded to the font. Several stragglers, whom idleness and curiosity had drawn together, were present; and a number of seamen on liberty, who knew their brother tars of the *Alfred*, joined company, wondering to find themselves inside such a grand place. When all the circumstances are taken into consideration, the spectacle was an extremely interesting one. There stood the minister, in his white surplice, by the side of an antique font, used in the days when dipping, not sprinkling, was the general mode of baptism. Near him was the clerk—grey-headed, with small eyes, and a consequential look that spoke him a man of great estimation in his own opinion—one who would have liked to have said 'I' to everything, but was compelled to adopt, in most cases, the first person plural. On the opposite side of the font appeared the clergyman's wife, in a dress of white muslin, holding the capering and crowing boy in her arms; whilst the tars, in their blue jackets and duck trowsers, placed themselves in front, facing the minister, with a solemnity on their countenances which they actually felt in their hearts. A bright gleam of sunshine came through the stained glass of the windows, throwing a variety of glorious tints around all, and giving an admirable finish to the picture.

The ceremony commenced; the clergyman, from being apprised of the nature of the case, omitting the opening question. But there was some difficulty in making the godfathers comprehend the subsequent inquiries. They readily promised 'to renounce the devil and all his works;' but when the question was put, 'Wilt thou be baptized in this faith?' Will hesitated.

'You must say, "That is my desire,"' whispered the clerk, somewhat scandalised at the want of promptitude in the reply.

'Avast, ould gentleman!' responded Will respectfully: 'it arn't me, but the babby, as is going to be thingumed.'

'The infant cannot answer for itself,' said Mr. Hector with patient meekness, 'and therefore you, as its godfathers, become sureties.'

'It's all a matter of form,' chimed in the clerk with self-complacency; 'you must make the response.'

'Now, yer reverence, I can understand being bound for the babby,' uttered Will; 'but I can't disactly make out the argufication of this ould gentleman here. If so be as Harry and I undertakes a solemn engagement, we considers it as double-bitted round our consciences to hould on by it; but if it's no more than a mere matter of form, why then I'm thinking——'

'It is not a mere matter of form, my friends,' answered the clergyman, 'but such as you take it to be—a solemn engagement,'—and his voice assumed a deep pathos,—'entered into with the Majesty of Heaven—the King of kings. As godfathers to the infant, wilt thou that it should be baptized in this faith?'

'Yes, yer reverence,' answered the coxswain, firmly; 'and may God A'mighty spare our lives—that's Harry and me—to do our duties by the child!'

The following prayers, fervently offered up by the divine, were listened to with the most earnest attention by the seamen; but when he came to the part 'Name this child,' the tar again hesitated.

'Why, in the regard o' that, yer reverence,' said Will, in a tone of mingled perplexity and determination,—'why, I must own that it has rather puzzled my edecation a bit, because, d'ye see——'

'You mustn't talk to the minister, but tell the name,' said the clerk, interrupting him.

'So I wool, ould gentleman,' returned the seaman, rather offended with the interference of the official; 'but his reverence, I take it, arn't

the person to throw a poor tar slap aback because, mayhap, he hasn't paid out the slack of "Amen" so often as you have.—I'm saying, yer reverence, as Harry and I have had a bit of a court of inquiry with my ould shipmate as keeps the Roaring Boreas, and——'

'What is your own name?' inquired the lady, fully sensible of the embarrassment of her husband, and desirous of putting an end to it as early as possible.

My name, yer ladyship!' reiterated the tar: 'why, my name is Will!—Will Blocks; and my messmate's, here, is Harry Finn,—Ould Flipper, as we calls him aboard: arn't it, Harry?—speak up for yourself, man.'

'Yes, that 'ere 's the name my mother guv me,' replied the tar; 'and it's logged down in the parish muster-book at Sevenoaks in Kent.'

'But the name of the infant,—the name!' said the clerk impatiently; 'you mustn't keep the minister waiting.'

'Avast, again, ould gentleman,' uttered Will rather peevishly: 'I'm thinking your shoving your oar in where it arn't wanted.'

'My good man,' said the lady kindly, 'if you have not already fixed upon a name, may I be permitted to suggest one? Yours is William, and your shipmate's is Henry: why, then, not have it William Henry, after our gallant young Prince, who, like yourselves, is in the naval service of his country?'

A buzz of approbation arose from the assembled seamen, to the manifest disturbance of the clerk; and many a blessing on the lady's head came from hearts that were honest and fervent in the wish.

The coxswain pondered a few minutes,—whispered to his brother godfather, who shook his head, and then exclaimed, 'Why, no, yer ladyship: though it would pleasure us both—that's Harry and me, yer ladyship—to have him named arter a son of our good ould King—God bless him!—yet, as names are somut like junk, generally cut up into short lengths when they're wanted, why, if he was to be christened William Henry, it ud soon get shortened into Will or Harry, and he'd float along without its ever being noticed; so, if yer reverence pleases, you may just christen him Ten-thousand Topsail-sheet Blocks;' and the tar gave a knowing hitch to his trowsers, and a circumferential twist to his tarpaulin hat.

If the seamen had before expressed approval of the proposition of Mrs. Hector, they now were in the indulgence of irrepressible gratification. William Henry, the name of his Royal Highness, the Duke of Clarence, had influenced their pride; but the latter was so connected with all their nautical feelings, that the sacred edifice echoed to a British cheer.

The clergyman and his excellent lady were for a minute or two quite staggered, and could scarcely refrain from laughter, so exquisitely ludicrous was the sudden announcement; whilst the clerk raised his hands, and opened his eyes in utter amazement.

'Ten-thousand what?' inquired Mr. Hector, his gravity temporarily yielding to the excitement.

'Ten-thousand Topsail-sheet Blocks,' repeated Will, clearly and deliberately: 'arn't that it, Harry?' The seaman assented by a nod.

'Are you really serious, my good fellow?' asked the minister, scarcely able to keep his countenance at the apparent sincerity of the tars.

'Why, yer reverence,' returned the coxswain with greater solemnity, and lowering his voice to a deeper tone, 'it arn't in a place like this, built and rigged, as I take it, for the peculiar sarvice of our Maker, that a man ought to be otherwise than serious: but if yer reverence thinks I've said or done anything contrary to regulations, why then I hopes you'll have the goodness to put in a word or two on my behalf, and make all square again.'

'You mistake me, my friend,' said the minister, at once called to the recollection of the sacred character of his office by the unintentional reproof of the seaman: 'but do you really wish, and intend to give the child so strange a name?'

'Why, that's just it, yer reverence,' responded Will, reassured by the gentleness and bland deportment of the minister; 'for, being a rather out-of-the-way sort of a consarn, like a fisherman's boot with a horse-dragoon's spur on it, we—that's Harry and me, yer reverence—we both on us thought that whomsomever heard the boy hailed by his name, would nat'rally be axing how he came by it; and so, mayhap, when his story's tould, it may chance to lead to the knowledge of his parents, and the true bearings and distance of the cause of his being turned adrift upon a sea-cruise with such a slender outfit.'

'Well, there certainly is sound argument in that, I must admit,' assented the clergyman; and taking the laughing infant in his arms, he sprinkled its face with water, and, to the great surprise of the clerk (who seemed almost scandalised by the transaction), but to the unbounded delight of the seaman, he was named accordingly 'TEN-THOUSAND TOPSAIL-SHEET BLOCKS.'

At the conclusion of the service, every tar crowded in to have a kiss of the baby, which they considered now as more especially and particularly devoted to their own peculiar calling. Will respectfully invited Mr. Hector to accompany him to the Roaring Boreas, to drink the youngster's health, which the minister mildly declined. He then invited the clerk, who peremptorily refused, and plainly told them he thought 'they were no better than barbarians, to give a Christian such a heathenish name.'

'Never mind, ould crusty,' said Will, pitching him half-a-guinea; 'go and get a glass o' grog to warm the fag eend o' your nose: and, I say, belay all animosity, and drink the boy's health and prosperity with all becoming piety—for it's a rough world, and mayhap he may want a friend in the steeple as well as in the church. Come along, lads! I'll be alongside of you again, directly I've seen Muster Brief, yer ladyship. Come along, my hearties! let's go

and give old Joe Breeze a benefit at the Roaring Boreas, all hands of you! sailor and landsman, seaman and lubber. Heave ahead, my boys!' And taking the child in his arms, he bowed to the minister and his wife, and passed down the aisle towards the entrance. He stopped, however, just within the doorway, attracted by a box on a wooden pillar, having painted upon it, 'Remember the poor.' Will spelt it out, and dropping in a guinea, his example, as far as charity went, though the amount might not be exactly the same, was pretty generally followed by all who had aught to give.

Joe Breeze was in sea-raptures when he ascertained that 'all was ship-shape in regard o' the name:' the grog was set a-broach, good roast and boiled of every description made the tables groan, and the worthy coxswain, that the christening might have proper *éclat*, invited every seaman he could pick up to partake of the cheer. Previous, however, to joining the convivial party, he resolved to complete another part of his undertaking, by waiting on the lawyer. Away strode Will, with the baby and the bundle, disregarding the observations which his appearance called forth from the passers-by, nor stopped till the letters 'BRIEF, *Solicitor*,' on a handsome brass plate, brought him up. The first word he readily spelt, but he could make nothing out of the other, and supposed it to be 'some outlandish lingo, to show the lawyer's larning.' Without hesitation he rang the bell, and a spruce young clerk appearing, inquired his business.

'Does Muster Brief live here?' asked Will, after a polite bow.

'No,' answered the clerk, with a pragmatical grin; 'but he gets his living here. What do you want with him, Jack?'

'You don't do all your master's business for him, I take it?' responded the coxswain, offended with the young man's impertinence.

'Not exactly: I don't do the eating and drinking,' replied the clerk; 'he keeps the goose to himself.'

'And sarves you up for sauce,' uttered Will, with a knowing look, as much as to say, 'There's a Roland for your Oliver.'

'Come, that's a fair hit, however,' said the young man: 'walk in, sailor. What! you made out the name, eh!—took a *spell* at it, I suppose?'

'Why, yes,' replied the coxswain, 'I made out this here to be 'Brief,' because it's logged down in plain English; but I suppose this monkeyfied, all legs-and-wings consarn, means you, seeing as nobody can understand it.'

'No, my friend,' dissented the clerk, more complacently, finding he had got hold of a queer customer; 'that word stands for So-li-ci-tor.'

'Or, what! and be d—— to you!' growled the seaman. 'You're a rum 'un to gammon a flat, Muster Lawyer; but you don't gammon me with your "Stand so—lie—sit," let me tell you. I wants to get alongside o' Muster Brief, and, to make short work of it, d'ye hear—is he at home or not?

'He is in his office, Mister Sailor, answered the clerk. 'Come in, and I'll let him know you are awaiting an interview.'

In a few minutes afterwards the coxswain was ushered into a comfortable and airy apartment, where, at a table covered with books and papers nicely arranged, sat an elderly man, with a hatchet-like contour of face that gave him a peculiarly sharp look, and a pair of eyes that would have stitched the button-hole of a shirt, they were so piercing. 'Your business?' inquired he.

'Why, yer honour,' returned the seaman, unshipping his truck and depositing it on the floor, 'I come from Captain Bayne.'

'Good! client of mine!' returned the worthy construer of statutes. 'Proceed.'

'Well, yer honour,' said Will, approaching nearer to the table, 'by his orders I've brought you Ten-Thousand Topsail-sheet Blocks.'

'Brought what!' screamed the man of the law, jumping up from his chair in amazement, and fixing his keen gaze upon the tar.

'Ten-thousand Topsail-sheet Blocks, yer honour,' returned the tar, placidly but firmly.

'Ten thousand devils!' ejaculated the lawyer with fierce impatience.

'No, yer honour, not by no manner o' means in the regard o' the gentleman you've named,' uttered the coxswain, equally warm: for the dandified conduct of the clerk, and the somewhat repulsive treatment of the lawyer himself, had put Will upon his mettle. 'It's Blocks, not devils.'

'One or the other, what can Captain Bayne mean?' returned Mr. Brief. 'Does he take my office for a dock-yard? Ten thousand! why, where am I to put them all?'

'The duds, yer honour?' asked the coxswain, rather more quietly. 'Oh, never fear; they'll not take up much room for stowage, seeing as they're all in this here bag,' holding it up at arm's length.

'Ten thousand topsail-sheet blocks in that bag!' exclaimed the lawyer, approaching to lay hold of it.

'No, yer honour,' responded the coxswain, laughing outright. 'He arn't in the bag. Lord love you! no: it's the duds.'

'Really, my good fellow, this is all mystery to me,' said the professional personage with greater gravity and mildness. 'Have you no communication—no letter from the captain that may afford an explanation?'

'By the tropics of war, and that's just it, yer honour,' returned the coxswain; and, stooping down, he took a letter from beneath the lining of his hat and presented it to Mr. Brief.

The solicitor received the letter, walked to his chair, sat down and attentively perused it, then, raising his sharp keen eyes to Will, he said:

'There's nothing about ten thousand or topsail-sheets here, my man. The captain writes about an infant.'

'And here it is, all alive and kicking! yer honour,' exclaimed Will, showing the baby;

'and his name is Ten-thousand Topsail-sheet Blocks, in regard of his having been christened this very morning.'

'Ho, ho!' rejoined the lawyer, who now began to understand the matter. 'Ay, ay! Your name is Blocks, I presume?'

At this moment Captain Bayne himself entered the office, and the whole affair was soon made clear to the ready comprehension of Mr. Brief, who without hesitation undertook the guardianship of the child. The 'duds' were rigidly inspected—replaced in the bag, which was fastened round with red tape, sealed up, labelled, and deposited in a large iron safe. Orders were given for the preparation of documents and deeds. All the leading features of the case were taken down upon the coxswain's deposition, everything was at length finally arranged, and Will took his departure for the 'Roaring Boreas,' where, having reported progress to old Joe Breeze, and left the infant in care of Mrs. Breeze, he joined his shipmates over their carouse. A general cheer followed his entrance into the great room, where some forty or fifty tars were getting into the happy sort of independence that mocks at discipline: but then they were ashore.

At the head of the table sat old Joe, his silvery hairs floating over his forehead and about his temples, and his breast full of enjoyment and gratification. He wore long togs, it is true; but his black silk handkerchief was still knotted round his neck according to old custom, and he had also a handsome silver chain and call that was presented to him by General Elliott, after the defeat of the Spaniards before Gibraltar, in the combined attack of Spain and France, on the 13th September, 1782. Joe at that period was boatswain's mate of the *Brilliant* frigate, commanded by Captain Roger Curtis; but all hands being sent to Europa Point to man the batteries, Joe had charge of a couple of guns, and pointed them so admirably as to call forth repeated commendations from the commander-in-chief; and he was the first in the barge when Captain Curtis went out to rescue the drowning men from the burning wrecks. The coxswain was killed by a falling timber from one of the Spanish line-of-battle ships that blew up, and Joe, and another were severely wounded; a hole was knocked through the bottom of the barge, into which the crew thrust their jackets, and Joe stretching himself upon them, prevented their being washed inward, and probably saved the whole of their lives. For his gallantry Captain Curtis strongly recommended him to the general, who not only presented him with the memorial before mentioned, but also subsequently obtained for him a comfortable pension, with which and his prize-money he looked out for a berth ashore. His favourite house of entertainment at Plymouth was the Pig and Whistle, kept by a decent linsey-wolsey widow named Gale, for whom Joe had had a sort of half-and-half regard many years before. She complained of being a lone woman in a manner that becalmed honest Joe's heart; he saw which way the wind lay, and he made her an offer. It was promptly accepted, and, as Joe said, 'he changed a heavy gale into a pleasant Breeze;' nor had he ever any occasion to repent it. His stream of life flowed smoothly on: he altered the sign of the house from the Pig and Whistle (which seemed something of a reflection upon himself and his silver call) to the Roaring Boreas, typified by the head of a chubby butcher's boy blowing wooden skewers; he carried on a rattling business, had served the office of overseer of the poor to the satisfaction of all parties, was respected and esteemed by every one, and particularly by his old shipmates, who consulted him on most occasions, from the buying of a watch to the purchase of a vessel; a number of the neighbouring tradesmen constantly passed their evenings in his snug parlour; and, to make short of it, Joe was far happier than the king he loved.

As soon as Will Blocks was seated, Joe clapped his call to his lips, and gave three chirps; and no admiral who ever carried such an article slung at his button-hole as the symbol of his rank was ever more promptly obeyed. Drunk and sober were instantly silent as Joe rose and thus addressed them: 'Genlemen, shipmates, allow me to propose a toast;—(cheers)—but, for the honour of the sarvice and for your headification, let me offer a few words afore I commences,—I mean, afore I drinks it; though any on you as is thirsty may take a fresh nip at starting, and no disparagement.' This was universally adopted. 'Genlemen, every man fore-and-aft, whatsomever his station may be, either aboard or ashore, is bound to do his duty by a messmate at all times; rig out his fin to a shipmate in distress, help a brother tar when he finds him hard up, and d—— the lubberly Crapoos. (Loud cheers.) What's the use, genlemen, of a ship's colours, if so be they're not allowed to be hoisted, to show what nation a craft belongs to? and what's the upshot of wearing a blue jacket if it arn't to be taken as proof positive that it kivers and keeps warm a bould and generous heart? (Great applause, and cries of "Go it, my hearty!") In my course through life, fair weather and foul, why, d'ye see, I've headed to every point of the compass except lubber's point; though mayhap, when a younker not much higher than the combings of a hatchway, I might take that first. Well, I've headed, as I said, to every point—ay, and every half-point too; sometimes under bare poles, or with a smack smooth deck; at other some, with studdensels packed on alow and aloft; often with three anchors ahead and stranded cables, and having a reef of dark rocks grinning and roaring like devils himps dead under our lee, and then again laying all ataunto with open hawse atwixt the two bowers, covered with flags from the jib-boom end right up to the three trucks, and so chock aft to the ring-tail iron on the spanker-boom, as fine as a chimbly-sweep on a May-day: and I've always found that the best way to keep a clear conscience, barring now and then sucking the monkey, is to do unto

others as you would have it served out to yourselves ;—(cheers)—and when death threatens to fall athwart your bows and cut your cables, no remembrance is so precious as having helped a fellow-creature as was struggling against trouble and adversity,—ay, even a Frenchman, after he has hauled down his ensign, barring he has fought fairly and is no coward. Now, messmates, I don't mean to say you're to be like a dog as is everlastingly in chase of his tail, and never claps it alongside, for proper discrimmagement is always necessary ; but d—— the heart as would let a fellow-creature sink whilst calculating the chances of getting a wet jacket to save him! (Applause.) That's my mark, and brings me at once slap home to the toast. Will Blocks, (reiterated cheers)—Will Blocks, (another cheer, and a sound of Joe's call)—Will Blocks and I have been messmates and shipmates on and off for more nor twenty years. I taught him to hand, reef, and steer ; and a 'cute scholar I found him at larning, so that he was soon able to beat his ould master. I know him to be a thorough seaman, and I hopes to live till he gets a handle to his name—(cheers) ; but it ain't in the regard o' that alone that I speak—it is the noble and generous disposition which has marked his cha-rackter through life. Messmates, his last act does him honour, and will be logged down in favour of a blue-jacket through a long line of our hangcestors yet unborn : it brings credit on us all, and therefore, messmates, I begs leave to propose health and prosperity to Will Blocks, with three times three.'

The long pulls at the grog, and the enthusiastic cheering, showed the good feeling of the tars ; and when it had subsided, the coxswain rose from his seat, and said—

'Messmates and shipmates, it arn't necessary, as I take it, for a fellow to have the gift of the gab to fight an enemy or to sarve a friend : but when he wants to pay out a goodish scope of gratitude and friendly hailings to them as wishes him well, then some o' your 'longshore talk would sarve to veer and haul upon ; and if I had any coiled away in my breast, d—— me if I wouldn't at this moment let it run out to the clinch, and hould on by your regards. (Loud cheers.) In the respect o' the younker,—God A'mighty bless him!' and Will's voice faltered : —'I'm saying, that in respect o' the younker,—all's fair and square, and I hopes we shall all live to see him hammer the French and do his duty like a man. I thank you from the very bottom of my sowl, messmates, for the manner in which you have drank my health, and axes it as a favour, that you will all drink long life, happiness, and prosperity to Ten-thousand Topsail-sheet Blocks.'

A round of applause followed the toast : the infant was brought into the room, and old Joe gave it a taste of his grog ; the younker smacked his lips, caught hold of the glass, and when Will took him in his arms to carry him away, he seemed delighted with the noise. In a short half-hour they were at Mr. Hector's ; and his excellent wife gladdened the heart of the coxswain by introducing to him a clean, motherly-looking woman, who would immediately take charge of young Ten. He gave the child a kiss, pressed a handsome gratuity upon the worthy clergyman, deposited a five-pound note in the hands of Mrs. Hector to buy 'immediate sarvice duds' for the boy—warmly expressed his gratitude for their generous kindness—took another and a last kiss of his young protégé, and then joined his shipmates at the Roaring Boreas over their grog, and passed a jovial night.

The following morning, accompanied by his messmate Harry, he signed, sealed, and delivered over his will, with power of attorney to Mr. Brief, and was true to a minute on the *Alfred's* deck. Blue Peter was flying at the fore, a convoy was waiting off the Ram Head, and before night, the gallant seventy-four was leading them down Channel with a spanking breeze. They reached the West Indies in safety, and led the van of the fleet under Sir Samuel Hood, in the engagement with the Count de Grasse on the 29th April, 1781, off Martinique, in which the *Alfred* behaved extremely well, against a very superior force, there being seventeen sail of the British line against twenty-four French sail of the line. On the 15th September in the same year, they were again engaged with the same opponents, the *Alfred* once more leading the van, off the Chesapeake, when fifteen sail of the British line attacked and drove into port twenty sail of the French line. Arduous and incessant were the duties they had now to perform during the next six months—one unfortunately arose from falling foul of the *Nymphe* frigate, by which both ships were considerably damaged. The navy at that period had not attained to the sanatory perfection which subsequently became so beneficial to the health of the men ; and the climate of the West Indies, to which they returned, was very destructive to human life. Yet Will weathered it all, breezes and calms, squalls and sunshine, fair winds and foul, fever and ague, physic and land-crabs, and his general good behaviour marked him out for promotion ; indeed, Captain Bayne, who had been partly brought up under Boscawen, was not the man to keep merit in obscurity, though he acknowledged he should very much regret parting with his coxswain.

The separation, however, took place much sooner than either expected, and the sorrow was more of a national than an individual character. In February, 1782, Sir George Rodney joined Sir Samuel off Hood Antigua, and took the chief command. After refitting at St. Lucia, and watching the enemy (who, by keeping close under Guadaloupe and Dominica, contrived to elude the vigilance of the English, and get into Fort Royal Bay), they again put to sea, and discovered that the Count de Grasse had quitted Martinique, in order to run down to leeward, for the purpose of effecting a junction with the Spaniards, and making a grand

attack upon the island of Jamaica. On the night of the 8th April, the enemy were observed by the British fleet under Dominica, in charge of a large convoy, and the gallant Rodney made the signal for a general chase; so that early the next morning several of the leading ships (amongst which was the *Alfred*) were close up with their transports, etc., the main body of the French fleet forming the line-of-battle to windward upon the starboard tack, heading for Guadaloupe. The British admiral then hoisted the signal to form the line; but the ships being becalmed under the high land at Dominica, could not readily take their stations. It was a trying and anxious moment. There lay the hostile fleets, perfectly unmanageable; the French, desirous of escaping, so as to carry their design into execution; the British, eager to lay them alongside, and already singling out the prizes they should win: yet there they lay, motionless, watching the dark line upon the verge of the horizon that evidenced the coming breeze.

The Count de Grasse, in his superb ship, the *Ville de Paris*, proudly walked his deck; but, well knowing the prowess of our hardy tars, his heart was ill at ease. The magnificent vessel that bore his flag was a present from the citizens of Paris to that strange compound of a monarch Louis XV. Her building and outfit had cost upwards of £170,000 sterling; and brave as the Count was, the bare idea of his gallant first-rate gracing the triumph of his opponents was truly galling. He was well aware that he would have many resolute supporters, but he also had good reasons for doubting the courage of others; yet he determined that his own conduct should afford a bright example for the rest. No less than thirteen hundred men were at their quarters in that floating fabric, the best of Gallia's boast.

And there in the British fleet lay a small black seventy-four, her commander a thorough tar of the old school, well known amongst the seamen as 'Billy Blue.' In those days, the wages of the seamen were not over regularly paid—long arrears were frequently due, and this was the case with the ship here mentioned. Previous to coming out with Rodney, the ship's company addressed a round-robin to the skipper, remonstrating against the injustice of neglecting their pay, as they were nearly destitute of clothing, and declaring they would not lift an anchor or fire a gun till their equitable demands were satisfied. Cornwallis knew and felt the impolicy and impropriety of keeping back the arrears; he was the seaman's friend, and well acquainted with all their peculiarities—so he ordered the hands to be sent aft, and when they had mustered, he told them the stoppage of their pay was no fault of his, and therefore they could not blame him for it. If, then, such was the case, disobedience to his orders would be a far worse offence than that from which they were then suffering, as it would be inflicting punishment on him for the faults of others. He appealed to their generosity, assured them of his best endeavours to get the grievance remedied, but in case affairs could not be arranged in time——

'You must lift the anchors, my lads,' said he, 'ay, and stow them too. Who is there amongst you that wouldn't sail with Rodney? And as for fighting, leave that to me, my men, leave that to me; for if we do fall in with the enemy, I'll take care to clap you alongside of the largest ship in his fleet, and then, my lads, you may just do as you please. Get a smell of French powder, and the devil himself won't keep you from your guns. I'll do all I can for you, my men; I admit you're not well treated, but trust to me to keep my word.'

The people had assembled with hostile feelings and angry countenances—they expected to meet with sturdy opposition from Billy Blue; but his conciliating language overpowered them, and they gave him three hearty cheers, which had no sooner subsided than the call of the boatswain's mate resounded, and his hoarse voice was heard, 'Grog a-hoy!' In fact, the grog—an extra allowance—had been mixed all ready, and the honest Jacks acquiesced in the reasonableness of the skipper's arguments, and quietly returned to their duty, implicitly relying on the promise they had received. Captain Cornwallis wrote to the Admiralty; but the *Canada* was ordered to sea before accounts were settled—the men reluctantly obeyed orders—but through the judicious management of the commander, they became more satisfied, and joined the fleet. And now, there stood Billy Blue, on the break of the *Canada's* poop, glass in hand, examining with minute inspection the whole of the enemy's line, as they caught a light breeze that just gave them steerage way. At length his look became fixed, a smile played upon his countenance, and taking the glass from his eye, he directed his first lieutenant 'to send the hands on the quarter-deck.' In a few minutes every soul fore and aft, with heads uncovered, stood on the place of honour. 'Send Benson, the quarter-master, here!' hailed the captain, and the individual named instantly stepped out from amongst the rest. He was a tall sturdy man, six feet in height, well made, and with open manly features: he had light hair, with a ponderous tail behind, and though the leader of the mal-contents, there was nothing in his manner indicative of bad-feeling or disrespect. 'Come up here, Benson,' said the captain, and the quarter-master promptly obeyed. 'Take my glass: look at the enemy's centre, and tell me what you see.'

The man unhesitatingly complied, took the glass, and directing his sight as ordered, replied, 'Ships in confusion, sir.'

'And what sort of ships are they, my man?' asked the captain, to the surprise of the crew, to whom the conversation was perfectly audible.

'There's two seventy-fours, sir; one eighty, and'—he hesitated a moment, as if undetermined in his object; he was desirous of a better view.

'And what?' inquired Cornwallis, his eyes sparkling with pleasure.

'And a three-decker, sir, with an admiral's flag at the main,' answered Benson, raising himself from the stooping position in which he had reconnoitred.

'Good—very good—you're a man of discernment, Benson,' uttered the captain, good-humouredly; 'that is the *Ville de Paris*, one of the finest ships out of France, carrying the flag of Count de Grasse. She's the craft for us, my men; and as you found me faithful in my word to try and get your arrears of pay, so now you shall see me adhere to my promise in running alongside of the biggest ship I can find. There she is, my lads! and I shall just place you in a proper position, that she may blow the little black ship out of the water if you wish it. Where's your no-fighting men now?' The seamen hung down their heads like great boys at school when lectured by the master, or caught in some trap they had set for others. 'If there are any amongst you who are afraid of a few shot, why stow yourselves away in the pump-well or the hold. Let the no-fighting skulkers come aft here on the poop; and my own *Canadas*, who will stand by their captain and officers, jump down to their quarters.' He raised his hand, the drum beat, and in an instant every soul was stationed at his proper gun.

The French fleet consisted of thirty-four sail of the line, two fifty-gun ships, ten frigates, seven brigs, two fire-ships and a cutter, besides merchantmen and transports. Sir George Rodney had thirty-six sail of the line, besides smaller vessels. The enemy first caught the breeze; but it was not long in reaching Sir Samuel Hood and his brave associates, who, in the van division, stood for the enemy's centre, when the action commenced, and was continued for some time, the van bearing nearly the whole brunt of the fire from every ship in the French fleet. The *Barfleur*, the *Royal Oak*, the *Alfred*, and the *Montague*, suffered very severely; but the centre of the British getting the wind, were soon enabled to join in the fight, and the rear division likewise coming up, the French shortly after made off, leaving the English to repair their damages.

The *Alfred* was the second ship in Sir Samuel Hood's division; and nobly did she sustain her character. Will Blocks was at the wheel, and steadily did his steering answer to the con of the master or the captain. Cornwallis fulfilled his engagement, and boldly attacked the *Ville de Paris*, his men behaving every way worthy of their gallant chief. It was about seven bells in the forenoon, when, just as Captain Bayne was descending the poop ladder, a shot from the *Glorieux*, (carrying a white flag at the fore) struck him on the thigh and shattered it to atoms. He held on by the man rope, and was easing himself gently down to the quarter-deck, when Will started from the wheel, caught him in his arms, and supported him till the arrival of the surgeon, who was some time before he could gain the deck with his instruments. The hemorrhage was very great, nor could anything stop it. The brave man was carried by his coxswain into the cabin. He requested the first lieutenant to carry on the duty, as Blocks was sufficient to take care of him. The doctor was about to apply the tourniquet; but before he could fix it, amidst the rattle of broadsides and the roar of warfare, the spirit of the gallant chieftain took its flight for ever.

Three days after, the great battle was fought; Sir George had by skilful manœuvres gained the weather gauge of the enemy, and broke their line in the old *Formidable*, followed by his seconds the *Namur** and *Canada*. The *Ville de Paris*, the *Glorieux*, the *Cesar* the *Hector*, and the *Ardent* were taken, and history gives the following record. 'The conduct of the *Canada*, Captain Cornwallis, excited great admiration. After singly engaging a French seventy-four until she struck, he bore down to the *Ville de Paris*, and was the longest engaged with her while the French fire was most violent.' Another historian says, 'The well-directed fire from the *Canada* annoyed the French admiral so much, particularly in his rigging and sails, that it made it impossible for him to escape. But the Count de Grasse, although cut to pieces, seemed determined to sink rather than yield to anything under a flag. At length Sir Samuel Hood came up in the *Barfleur*, and sixty men fell from her first broadside. In less than ten minutes more the colours of this beautiful ship were hauled down.' So that it appears Billy Blue rigidly kept his word. In the *Ville de Paris* were found no less than thirty-six chests of money, intended for the pay and subsistence of the troops in the contemplated invasion of Jamaica.

Besides Captain Bayne, Captain Blair of the *Anson* was also killed, and Lord Robert Manners, brother to the Duke of Rutland, a young nobleman of great promise, who, though only twenty-five years of age, fought the *Resolution* most ably, was so severely wounded, that he died on board the *Andromache*, on her passage to England. The Parliament, to perpetuate their memory, and at the same time to manifest economy, gave these brave men a joint-stock monument in St. Paul's Cathedral.

The *Alfred* suffered severely in the gale of wind which destroyed several of the British fleet and all the prizes on the 16th September. The glorious trophy, the *Ville de Paris*, foundered; the *Ramilies* and *Centaur* shared the same fate, and scarcely a ship escaped uninjured. Will at length arrived off the Land's End, the *Alfred* in a sad leaky state, her main and mizen masts gone; but his heart was in the right place, though he deeply felt the loss of his kind and excellent patron.

* For many years afterwards guardship at the Nore, and well known to the junior officers in the service.

CHAPTER II.

'How gay and brave they sailed from port! How many a kind heart threw
A last farewell to the parting ship, and her young and gallant crew!
Now in the desert sea she lies, a helpless silent thing;
Linked to a tale of blood and crime, of death and sorrowing!

W. B. CHORLEY.

DURING the absence of the worthy seaman, young Ten-thousand improved amazingly in growth and vigour. The person with whom he had been placed most honestly and faithfully discharged her duty. She respected the clergyman and his kind-hearted lady, who were not only constant in their inquiries after his welfare, but frequently had the boy to visit them at their house, where Mrs. Hector was a godmother in practice as well as in name, and inculcated those principles into his mind which can never be imparted at too early an age. 'Train up a child in the way in which it should go,' was a favourite maxim with her; and having no family of her own on whom to practise the precept, she devoted her best energies to fulfil the obligations she had undertaken for the poor little fellow who had been so strangely thrown upon her care. Mr. Brief made his monthly professional inspection and payment as regularly as clock-work. Nearly the same words, at the same hour of the day, were uttered twelve times in each year. The boy was honoured by a gracious pat on the head in the way of encouragement. The nurse received her money carefully done up in paper, a piece of red tape fastened round it, and sealed with the office seal, bearing the word so much prized by barristers, 'Brief!' The receipt was all prepared ready for signing, the name of the nurse was affixed, and the little lawyer left the minor details of nourishment and instruction to less important personages. But he did not relax in the prosecution of his inquiries relative to the boy's origin, and the cause of his being so shamefully abandoned. Advertisements were from time to time published in the leading newspapers, but without effect. Not a single circumstance transpired—not the slightest information could be obtained that threw the faintest gleam of light upon the subject.

Of all, however, who patronised our hero, none was more truly valued by him than the landlord of the Roaring Boreas, who at intervals regularly loaded himself with cakes and toys, and having got under way from his snug moorings, made his voyage, and discharged his cargo, to the great delight of the consignee. No nobleman's son could be more plentifully supplied with amusement, and guns, whistles, trumpets, ships, drums,—in short, a little of everything strewed the house. Strangers admired the fine features of the lad; his story was a thousand times repeated; and whilst the unusual name caused mirth, the occurrence itself excited a lively interest in his welfare.

On his return to Plymouth, Will Blocks obtained leave, and his first visit was to his old friend Joe Breeze, now become a man of no small consideration, and master of extensive property, that entitled him to several votes as a freeholder in the counties of Devonshire and Cornwall, as well as for some borough towns in both. With party politics Joe was totally unacquainted. The distinction between Whigs and Tories he never could understand, but 'church and king' was everything in his estimation; and he who could shout it longest and loudest carried off his vote. Still he would not personally interfere to influence those who were in some measure under his control. No persuasion could induce him to discharge his tenants for not going the same way with himself. He used to say, 'every man ought to know best the trim of his own craft, and which tack she was most likely to make the longest board on.' Will met with a cordial reception from his old shipmate, though somewhat puzzled at his flourishing speeches and assumptions of dignity. Yet they overhauled their recollections of past times—mixed their grog half-and-half—gave a sea-sigh to the memory of the departed, and then the hardy tar 'hauled his wind' to see his young protegé. Sincere and warm were his expressions of delight when he found him a bold strapping boy of five years, full of frolic and fun; and honestly did he declare his gratitude and satisfaction when the evidences of kind and excellent treatment were so manifest before him. Young Ten was equally pleased with his benefactor, whose pockets were crammed with all sorts of presents suited to infantile amusement; and our hero considered that there was only one man in the world of greater consequence, and that was Joe Breeze.

The interviews which Will Blocks had with Mr. Hector and Mr. Brief were more of a professional character than otherwise. To the former he made the most sincere acknowledgment, of thankfulness, conjoined with a handsome present; and to the latter he gave fresh powers to receive a considerable addition of prize-money. He then rejoined old Joe, and they passed the remainder of the day together in jollity and joy—Joe assuring his old messmate and pupil that, 'by the earnest persuasions of his wife, he meant to resign the command of the Roaring Boreas, and lay up in ordinary for the rest of his days; but, somehow or other, when it came to the point, neither of them could make up their determination to quit a craft that had been so lucky.'

Another week, and Will Blocks was again at sea, in a smart frigate bound to the East Indies; but soon after his departure, an important change took place in the future prospects of our hero. The person to whose immediate care he had been confided was attacked by apoplexy, and in a few hours became a corpse. Ten-thousand had been very much attached to the woman, who had behaved to him with a kindness truly maternal; and this bereavement was doubly felt by the

child, and it may, in fact, be considered as his first experience of real sorrow. Joe Breeze, Mr. Brief and Mr. Hector held a consultation relative to the future disposal of the boy, which terminated in the worthy clergyman, with the sanction of his amiable lady, receiving him into his own family, a competent amount for board and education being appropriated to defray the expense.

This was on all accounts a happy improvement for the child, as Mr. Hector had none of his own, and yet was extremely fond of children. He was also a man of deep research and extensive knowledge; and as he found his pupil acute and intelligent, so he contrived every opportunity to impress upon his mind the advantages of religion, whilst he imparted the necessary instruction to improve the intellect. The boy venerated his kind preceptor, and his still kinder wife; he was diligent and attentive to his studies, was affable in his temper, and always desirous to please; and in his new sphere he very soon gained the estimation of all who favoured him with their notice.

Years passed on, and the boy grew tall of his age, extremely handsome, with a strong robust frame, and enjoying excellent health. His predilection was evidently for the ocean, and his bias received additional weight from frequent conversations with old Joe Breeze, whose tales of distant climes and the joys (!) of a sea life had so won upon his admiration, that he longed to become a sailor. Mr. Hector, finding that the bent of his inclination was the result of principle, and not mere boyish frivolity, immediately directed his mind to those studies which would be most useful to him in his future career as a navigator, and, to the great satisfaction of the teacher, the pupil exceeded even his most sanguine expectations, by the readiness with which he became a proficient in mathematics, and its appliances to practical navigation and astronomy: he also imbibed a good classical knowledge, could talk and write the French language fluently, wrote a free bold hand; but that which engrossed most of his attention was drawing and planning; and in these departments he greatly excelled, so that at twelve years of age, through the judicious management of Mr. Hector, and the noble stimulus he applied, young Blocks had made further progress in his education than most lads at fifteen and sixteen. The fact was, that, though treated kindly, and even with parental feeling, he had not been pampered and spoiled by mistaken indulgence.

Mr. Hector was only a poorly paid curate, in humble circumstances, devoted to the sciences, and ardently attached to those pursuits which, whilst they exalt the understanding above the grovelling things of earth, at the same time but too frequently keep the body without the comforts, and sometimes even the necessaries of life. Still he was happy in the affections and piety of his wife—happy in the faithful discharge of his ministerial functions, and uttered no complaints when circumstances pressed heavy against him.

About this time Mr. Hector received an offer of a more eligible curacy, at a village some seven or eight miles distant from Plymouth, but situated near the coast. It was a lovely spot, just suited for quiet retirement from the obtrusive world, and thither, after another consultation with the lawyer and the landlord, young Ten-thousand accompanied his instructor. Mr. Brief was punctual in his quarterly payments, but, as some considerable time had elapsed since any information had been received of the whereabouts of Will Blocks, he suggested the propriety of preparing the youth as early as possible for the busy bustling of active life; for though he had yet remaining plenty of money to go on with, still it would be preferable to retain some little store to fit the lad out and to assist him in his future operations. Old Joe fully acquiesced in the proposition, which was not lost on Mr. Hector, who devoted all the energies of his mind to advance the knowledge of his pupil.

In the neighbourhood of the parsonage stood Wellmore Hall, the country seat of a retired merchant, who had made an ample fortune, principally through his connection with a rich trader in Holland. One privilege of the clergy, however poor in circumstances they may be, is admission into the best society, as far as rank and riches take the precedence; and in the habitations of the wealthy they are generally admitted as respected guests, which may be adduced as an evidence that learning, conjoined with piety, is esteemed by the aristocracy of England. How far this deduction may be correct, I shall leave to others to determine, having in my narrative to deal principally with facts. Certain it is that Mr. and Mrs. Hector at all times met with a gracious reception at the Hall; and Ten-thousand, on account of his short but eventful history, as well as his amiable qualities, became a universal favourite, but more especially among the junior branches of the family; and one of the French noblesse, who had been driven by the Revolution from his home, having found an asylum under the roof of Mr. Wellmore, was so pleased with his knowledge of the French language, that he took great pains to perfect him both in grammatical construction and pronunciation, till he had attained a perfect mastery, and could converse with all the ease and fluency of a native.

The daughter of the Dutch merchant was also on a visit to the Hall, and being about the same age as our hero, they pursued their studies together. Ten-thousand experienced unusual pleasure in associating with the pretty Hollander, and he took great pains in teaching her English, whilst he endeavoured through her means to obtain some knowledge of that semi-barbarous tongue the Dutch. Eugenia and Blocks were almost inseparable companions; for, after the time devoted to instruction, they ranged the summer-fields; he plucked the wild flowers to decorate her hair; he told her of his early

history, and the longings of his heart to ascertain who his parents were ; in short, he had found one to whom he could unburthen all the griefs and cares of his mind, and she would throw her arms round his neck in childish sympathy, soothe his distress, kiss away his tears, till he was once more tranquil and happy.

No tidings whatever had been heard of the benevolent tar who had rescued the orphan of the ocean from destruction, and had also carried out the god-like principle of charity, by appropriating a great portion of his prize-money to the maintenance of the child. Apprehensions were entertained that he was no more, and though the lad preserved but a feeble recollection of the worthy seaman, yet his grief was unfeigned at the thoughts of losing one to whom he was so much indebted. 'My good lad,' said Mr. Hector to him one day, after they had completed their usual studies—'my good lad, you are already acquainted with every circumstance connected with your situation, and much as it will grieve me to part with you, yet a sense of justice to yourself impels me to prepare you for entering on the great world. You have selected the life of a sailor for that which you wish to pursue. There is the same Providence at sea as on shore, and the hand that was outstretched in mercy when you were cast a helpless infant on the turbulent waters can shield you in the midst of dangers calculated to appal the mind of man, although they manifest the power of the Creator. I have, under the blessing of Heaven, endeavoured to instil right precepts to guide you in your course amongst the many worthless —no, I will not call them worthless, for every soul is precious in the eye of the Almighty—but I will say, the many irreligious and profane with whom you must necessarily hold companionship. I have also imparted such grounds of instruction, as far as my poor scholarship will admit, to render you not wholly ignorant of the sciences ; it is yourself that must build a substantial superstructure upon both, and may the Omnipotent who arrayeth the lily of the field and feedeth the young ravens when they cry, be your friend and father !' The good man became too affected to proceed for some minutes, and the lad, taking his hand, bathed it with tears. At length more calmly he proceeded. 'Yes, my boy, the Great Being himself has said, "I will be a father to the fatherless :" do you then place yourself as a humble and dutiful son beneath the shadow of his wing. To-morrow, Mr. Brief will be here to make arrangements for the future. The service of your country is a service of honour and credit, and, come what may, though silver I have none, and gold I have none, yet what I have you shall have share with me, and at all times consider my residence your home. Go now, my young friend, commune with your own heart, and seek counsel of your Maker, that you may be directed to that which is best.' He pressed the hand of the agitated boy and left the room.

The youth obeyed the advice of his kind preceptor, and kneeling down, his aspirations were addressed to the throne of grace. He then walked out in the glorious sunshine, and beheld all nature smiling around him. A feeling of confidence assured his heart and filled it with pleasing tranquillity. At the borders of the grounds attached to the Hall he was joined by Eugenia, and together they strolled through the village and along the main road, conversing on the painful prospect of soon parting, when they were accosted by a remarkably noble-looking man in naval uniform, who inquired the way to the parsonage. The lad's heart warmed at the sight of the cloth, and he immediately proffered his services to show him the way.

'Ten-thousand-Top—I mean thanks, young gentleman,' returned the officer, taking off his hat and bowing ; 'and you too, my pretty lass, will lend a hand to tow a poor tar into safe moorings, eh ?'

'Yes, mynheer,' replied the smiling girl, 'we sall be too moosh happy for do you very good.'

'Well, I'm blessed,' exclaimed the officer, 'if this arn't curious anyhow, to be called "mynheer" on the coast of Devonshire !'

'She is a native of Holland,' said the lad, rather offended at the seaman's bluntness ; 'but what of that ?'

'I hopes no offence, young gentleman,' rejoined the officer ; 'I'm sartin none was meant. You're English, howsomever, by your running your guns out so quick in defence of a petticoat. That's right ; never see a female with a signal of distress, and clap your glass to a blind eye.'

'This way, sir,' said the appeased lad, turning to the left off from the road. 'We must go down the lane ; it is the pleasantest way.'

'Shape your own course, and I'll folllow in your wake, young gentleman,' retuned his companion ; 'but I'm thinking it's what they calls one o' the mummylies of life that an ould tar who has been boxing about to all parts of the world at sea shouldn't be able to work a traverse for a few miles ashore without a pilot. Howsomever, it arn't in reason that I should know the bearings and distance of a port so well as those who were born in it.'

'I was not born here,' rejoined the youth, somewhat mournfully. 'Indeed, I do not know where I was born.'

'What ! no one to keep your reckoning ?' exclaimed the officer, looking earnestly in his face. 'Well, them is hard lines anyhow. Pray do you know the parson as I am going to see ?'

'Mr. Hector ?' returned the lad, smiling at the question. 'Yes, I know him very well ; he is one of my best friends.'

'And mayhap you may remember a child he has under his convoy,' continued the other ; 'a pretty bold little craft named——'

'Ten-tousand, come here ; get one petit bouton for me,' called Eugenia, who was somewhat in the rear.

'Eh ! what ?' exclaimed the officer, stopping short and catching hold of the lad's arm. 'By what name did she hail you ?'

'By my proper name,' replied the boy, firmly,—'Ten-thousand——'

'Topsail-sheet Blocks,' added the other, interrupting him impatiently.

'Yes, you are perfectly right, sir,' answered the youngster. 'Unhappily I know no other.'

'You, young gentleman! you the child I left in short duds a year or two ago?' exclaimed the officer, his eyes twinkling with pleasare. 'You the babby that I stowed away in my breast when the wind and waves had marked you for their prey? Give us your fin, my hearty; there's no needs to say what cheer, for, by the look on you, you've had snug moorings and been well victualled. And now, my boy, what d'ye say to washing your hands in salt water?'

The youth contemplated the appearance of the person who thus addressed him with gratified pleasure. There was an open candour on his countenance and frankness in his manner well calculated to make their way to the heart of the young. But when he heard him acknowledge himself as having known him in infancy, his pulse beat quicker, and sensations of hope and alarm rushed alternately across his mind. The individual who had rescued him from death was a foremast man, the person by his side was an officer, and Ten-thousand was not sufficiently acquainted with the regulations of the service to know that the warrant-officers are selected from amongst the seamen; yet an idea that he was in the presence of his benefactor strongly suggested itself, and warm feelings of respect and gratitude kindled in his breast.

'You mention circumstances connected with my infancy,' said he, rather agitated by conflicting emotions. 'Will you do me the favour to tell me if you are a friend of Mr. Blocks?'

'Why, as for the matter of being his friend, I can't disactly say,' returned the other, laughing with gratification and good humour. 'We've sailed together many a long year, and I was with him when he picked you up in Plymouth Sound. You were another guess sort of a consarn, I'm thinking, then, to what you are now. Why, Lord love the boy, how he is grown!'

'I had hoped,' said the lad, rather chagrined at what he deemed a disappointment, 'to have found in you the kind patron who has enabled me to be what I am. You're not Mr. Blocks, then?'

'You never axed me,' responded the officer more seriously. 'Yes, my lad, I am Will Blocks; and let it be what the larned calls a maxim with you, when you hails a craft, to do so boldly, without backing and filling in your speech. I am Will Blocks, and right glad am I to come alongside of you again!'

'You are promoted, then?' said the delighted boy; whilst Eugenia, comprehending the scene, took hold of the seaman's rough hand between her little delicate fingers.

'Why, for the matter o' that,' returned the other, 'it's not always merit meets with its proper reward, or some people might be a little higher in the sarvice: but, to satisfy you, young gentleman, I am now gunner of his Majesty's ship *Scratchee*, Captain Joseph Sydney Yorick; and I hopes soon to have the satisfaction of seeing you rated on her quarter-deck, as stiff as a midshipman, as the saying is. But, come along! let's make sail to the clergyman. I'm bless'd if I arn't as happy as a prince!'

Mr. Hector received his visitor with his accustomed politeness and urbanity, and felt extremely pleased to find him in a superior station; and though he could not but contemplate the parting with his pupil without deep regret, yet, as knowing it was requisite for his future welfare, he hoped that the lessons he had received would not easily be lost sight.

'Muster Brief will bring up in your roadstead this afternoon,' said the gunner. 'He wanted me to keep my anchors down and come out in his one-horse jigamaree thing; but, thinks I to myself, "I don't know the build or rig of the consarn, and two or three hours are somut in a man's life;" so I e'en made sail alone. —But, Lord love the lad!' looking at Ten-thousand, 'why, it seems but yesterday that I puckelowed him out o' the punt and slued him up, starn foremost, to the first leftenant. And now!—Well, God A'mighty bless yer reverence, and you, my lady!—when one on you is moored in heaven, may the other be lashed alongside, for your kindness to the babby!'

A light cart at this moment drove up to the gate, at the bottom of the garden, and a young man alighted and rang the bell.

'Who or what can this be, my dear?' said Mr. Hector, addressing his wife, and then reading the name upon the cart, 'George Mason, Wine Merchant, Plymouth,'—'I know no such person.'

'He has perhaps brought you a letter from the doctor,' replied his wife. 'The vehicle often passes this way, and he may be one of the doctor's parishioners.'

'True, my dear,' returned her husband, 'but he is handing down baskets, and old Grace is receiving them as if they were indeed designed for me. There must be some mistake.'

'No mistake whatsomever, yer reverence,' said Blocks, respectfully. 'I thought the lubber had discharged his cargo afore this, seeing as he promised to be under weigh an hour before I started. The case is just as this here, yer ladyship: Thinks I to myself, "What's life without a drop o' grog," all in the middleun way, in course, your reverence; but then, thinks I, "the clargy don't drink grog;" so Muster Brief recommends me to a fair-dealing chap, and it's no mistake in the world, but all your own, in the regard o' drinking the boy's health and prosperity.'

The servant, who had been called, old Grace, entered, and, addressing her master, said, 'There's three dozen o' port, sir—three dozen o' sherry, six bottles o' brandy, and six bottles o' rum.'

'And I'll just trouble you for one on 'em, and a corkscrew,' interrupted Blocks, 'seeing that the dust's got down my throat in walking.'

'There's a box, too—and a bag—and a leg o' mutton and a goose—and a couple o' ducks

—and a side o' bacon—and tea and sugar—split-peas—and bacca—and a bottle of milk—and——'

'Ay, ay, lovey! there's a little summat of everything, from a mould candle to a mouse-trap,' said Blocks, laughing. 'Why, Lord love your heart! do you think, after sarving his Majesty, man and boy, for five-and-thirty years, I don't know what's wanting in a mess? But hand us in the box, my beauty! Though for the matter o' that, there's no occasion to give you the trouble, seeing as I'm the ouldest and the ugliest, and best able to do it myself.'

He was, however, spared his labour this time, as the young man who drove the cart brought in the box and 'hoped all was right.'

'Ay, ay, my hearty! all square,' returned Blocks, giving him some silver: 'and mayhap his reverence here will order you a glass o' grog.' Grace brought in the bottle and the corkscrew. 'Or avast! have I your leave, yer reverence? he shall have a taste o' this.'

Mr. Hector gave his ready assent; but the young man stopped the operation of the tar by saying: 'I would rather have a drink of home-brewed ale, if you please.'

'Every man to his liking, my hearty!' exclaimed Blocks, whilst the worthy curate directed Grace to supply his wants. The gunner filled a good-sized tumbler nearly half full of rum, and then pouring in the water from a jug held nearly two feet above it, there was an appearance of effervescence, but no time was allowed to test the fact, for the whole was out of sight at a draught. The gunner smacked his lips with a gusto, and drawing a long breath, uttered, as he put down the empty glass, 'Never make two bites of a cherry—won't yer reverence try it?'

'Not now, my kind and excellent friend,' answered the minister; 'after dinner I will indulge in a glass of wine with you. But your generosity has been over-taxed; we have done nothing to merit such attention.'

'Arn't you, though!' exclaimed the gunner, rising from his chair, the blood rushing to his face, for he had given the words their literal meaning. 'Then all I've got to say is'—his eye rested on the youth, he paused a moment, smiled with pleasure, his placidity returned, and ejecting a stale quid from the window, he uttered the word 'gammon.'

The clergyman and the lady were surprised at the change in the manner of their visitor; but the former soon divined the cause. 'I accept your bounty readily, Mr. Blocks,' said he, 'and the more so as I feel that it has all been kindly meant, as a token of your esteem.'

'You're working the right traverse now, yer reverence,' returned Blocks, reseating himself, and casting a wistful eye at the bottle. 'It's real Jemakee that, but I thinks there's a twang of the cask.' He filled another half-glass. 'Let the box alone, you young scamp?' added he, laughingly, to Ten-Thousand, who with Eugenia was wondering what it could contain. The parson and his lady turned their heads towards the party addressed, and the grog disappeared.

'Shall I cook the mutton, ma'am, or the ducks?' inquired Grace, opening the parlour door. 'There's a bag of turnips, and plenty of sage and inyons. If they live so well at sea, Muster Officer, I should like to be a sailor.'

'Barring the breezes, ould girl,' returned Blocks: 'them short duds 'ud look queerish skimming aloft to take in a reef. May I stand caterer, yer reverence?' Mr. Hector bowed. 'I ax pardon; it's the lady as I should ask.'

'Make yourself quite at home, Mr. Blocks,' said Mrs. Hector; 'order and do as you please.'

'Thanky, thanky, yer ladyship,' uttered the gunner. 'Then I say, my beauty, let's have both on 'em: and if you wants any help in the cooking-way, such as a dow-boy or two, or a fathom o' plum-duff, why then just give me a hail: my long togs arn't made me forget I've had my day to be cook o' the mess; and though it wouldn't be ship-shape for an officer of my rank to——but there, I'm ashore, and Lord love your heart! I means to enjoy myself.'

Old Grace chuckled and simpered at being called a beauty by 'Muster Sailor-officer,' and when her mistress accompanied her from the room to forward the arrangements, she exclaimed, 'Well, ma'am, I remember when I held you in my arms a babby, and that's some few years ago; but never in my life before did I behold a more handsomer and properer a man than Muster Blocks.'

The box was opened. On the top were scattered three or four hundred full-grown 'capstan-bar cheroots,' as the gunner termed them—then came a piece of beautiful Bandanna handkerchiefs, and under this a handsome palampoo. Next appeared a delicate dress of China silk, and another of crape, enclosed in which were a large cornelian necklace, two small Chinese josses or idols, and a quantity of choice spices that diffused a delightful fragance, two bottles of real otto of roses, and several other things; and beneath all was the skin of a young tiger, with a number of pieces of cornelian, for shirt-buttons, bracelets, watch-seals, etc. The young people examined everything with delight; and, if the truth must be told, the older folks were equally gratified.

'They're all your own, yer ladyship,' exclaimed the gunner as Mrs. Hector quitted the room, 'except the josses, and them I brought for his reverence.'

'"Man makes a god and worships him,"' uttered Mr. Hector, taking up one of the hideous images and inspecting it. 'What blindness!—I may say, what madness! The heathens bow down to such a thing as this.—But stop,—let me be just! Do not Christians, and well-educated Christians too, erect altars in their hearts, and offer incense to idols of their own creation? And need inquiry be made as to which is most offensive to the Deity?'

'Why, as to the matter o' that, yer reverence,' responded the truth-loving seaman, who supposed the question was literally put to himself, —'as to the matter o' that, it ud puzzle my edecation a bit to decide, because why—there's

only ONE as can sarche the heart and knows the reckoning it keeps. Now, I arn't had much bringing up in the way of parson-craft ; but yet I thinks an Ingin or a nigger arn't much 'sponsible rationality in the regard a knowing a pulpit from a wash-deck tub—and the ignoramuses with nothing to kiver their nakedness except an —— clout—saving the lady's presence ; though, being of the mynheer build, mayhap she mayn't understand me.—I'm saying, yer reverence, that being nothing but naked dark-skinned ignoramuses, barring the article afore named, it ud seem a comical sight to 'em, if they were pitched into one of our churches, to see a man in a shirt stuck up aloft like Jack in a box, and——'

'It would—it would, my friend !' interrupted Mr. Hector, who feared that the plain-spoken seaman might possibly utter something derogatory to the sacred office. 'Every nation has its peculiarities and superstitions ; and it is worthy of remark, that particular classes have particular objects either of veneration or alarm. The sailors, for instance, have a strange superstition relative to the rat.'

'There's no superstition in that, yer reverence,' answered Blocks solemnly ; 'it's all as true as gospel. I see'd it once myself, and, if you've no objections, I'll just tell you all about it.'

'It shall have my profoundest attention,' said the clergyman, seating himself near the gunner ; and, despite his remarks on superstition, he manifested an eager desire to hear the story.

'Well, then, yer reverence,' said the gunner, apparently unconsciously, and from the mere force of habit, mixing himself another glass of grog, 'I'll just overhaul the consarn a bit in my own mind, so as to make everything ship-shape. Because why? A man's memory is more like the log-board than a log-book—a rough rub with a hand-swab wipes away the chalk from the one, whilst the other keeps its reckoning to the last ; and I don't happen to have any memorandums of what took place.' He passed his horny hand over his head, either to quicken his intellect or to smooth his hair, rubbed his eyes, twitched his tail over his shoulder, tasted his brewing, and added with solemnity, 'I'm thinking, yer reverence, that what you call superstition about them there rats is sumut of a different natur. Now, a seaman's a sort o' water-rat, and there's a kind of an *inkstink* about 'em both ; though in the regard o' the four-legged creaturs, not having the gift o' reason, the Creator has seen fit to bestow a matter o' knowledge that the tar doesn't possess. And it's the same with most hannimals ; for whilst man works his traverse by book-larning and figures, the hannimals have a way of their own that ud put a philosopher to the blush.'

'Very true, my friend—very true,' answered the clergyman ; 'the unerring Wisdom that framed all things and called them into being has indeed bestowed a wonderful instinct where reason is denied. Indeed, it has long been a matter of doubt, whether some animals—particularly the elephant and the dog—have not a glimmering of reasoning faculties.'

'Mayhap so, yer reverence—mayhap so,' returned the gunner, 'and I've sometimes thought the same of the niggers ;—but I arn't much skilled in the matter. Howsomever, you shall hear what I've got to say about the rats.'

The deepest attention prevailed. Ten-thousand and the little Dutch girl sat down eagerly to listen, and after again taking a pull at his grog, Mr. Blocks commenced. 'It's likely yer reverence has heard the fag-end of a song what says,

"There's a sweet little cherub sits perch'd up aloft
To look out for the life of poor Jack."

—Well, all I got to say is, that no bishop or commander-in-chief among the clargy could ever take a truer aim—text, I mean, from which to spin his sarmon, than them there lines. At the peace of 1762 I was discharged from the ould *Valiant*, seventy-four, Captain Duncan, after taking the Havanna, which cost us many a brave fellow's life for nothing, as the place was soon afterwards given up again. But I'm saying, there I was discharged because they'd no use for me just then ; and as I never had any very kindly liking for the shore whilst there was a bit of timber afloat, I ships myself in a barque as was fitting out off Wapping, bound to Canada, which had just then been turned over by parchment articles to England. Well, after taking in our cargo, we drops down to Deptford, and lashed alongside an empty East Ingeeman to wait for the morning tide. It was a beautiful moonlight night, and being only a youngster, I was ordered by the mate to look out on deck all the first watch, to see that no picarooning thieves laid their grapplin hooks on what didn't belong to them. Now, I'd been brought up in a sarvice where obedience was always made the test of duty ; though, for the matter o' that, them as were slack in stays had their way freshened by a bull's——, saving the presence of the ladies :—so I walks the deck now and then, looking over the bows and starn, and at last thinks I to myself, I'll e'en go and have a peep aboard the Ingeeman ; so I clambered up her side, for her gangway laid like the wall of a church above us, and when I peeped over everything was as plain as broad daylight —her decks were all clear, there warn't so much as a rope-yarn to be seen in the way of gear ; but there was a sort of skreeling and skrimmaging about the capstan that puzzled me, so I gets into the main chains and looks through the quarter-deck port, and there I saw about a dozen rats almost as big as young donkeys.'

'They must have been monsters indeed, my friend,' said Mr. Hector, looking at the grinning youth, who was all eagerness to hear.

'Well, well, they mightn't be quite so large as young donkeys—indeed, I didn't say they were,' uttered the gunner, rather impatient at the interruption ; 'but they certainly were the largest I ever did see ; and one of 'em was seated on the combing of the after-hatchway, whilst the rest were standing or moving about and kicking up a precious bobbery of squealing and screeching. "My eyes !" thinks I ; "but

here's a council o' war going on ;" and the fellow on the combing gets up on his hind legs, much after the fashion of a kangaroo, and he steadies himself by his own rigger, and I'm blessed but he was a rattler ! so he comes down off his perch, and they all turned to scrambling about the decks, and some on 'em runs down the headropes aboard of the barque. "Yo hoy !" says I to myself, "but that won't do—anything but a rat for a shipmate !" And so I goes cautiously along by the side steps ; but either they didn't see me or didn't mind me, for up they went again, and one on 'em got the eend of a ball o' spun-yarn in his mouth, and he whips through the port with it, and screeched out like blue murder. Up comes another with a piece of ould canvass, followed by a third with as much oakum as he could carry. "Well," thinks I to myself, "what can these fellows be going at?—howsomever, I won't disturb 'em, anyhow ;" for I wanted to see what they meant to do. So, yer reverence, they lays the gear down upon the deck—all but the eend o' the spun-yarn, which a rat that did not move about much held on by—and off they starts again in a body, down into the barque, and they drags a quantity of shakings and all the loose stuff as they could pick up just under the Ingeeman's port. After this, they returns to the chap as was houlding on, and one on 'em takes up the slack o' the spun-yarn about four inches away from the other's head, and leads him to the edge of the portsill, and then it struck me, from the yarns I'd heard about such varmin, that the ould chap was blind. Well, next they brings the canvass and spreads it ; and then they laid a tier of the oakum, and the ould blind un stretches himself out on top of it, and they lapped him up snug. "Well, I'm blow'd," thinks I, "but that's doing on it, anyhow !" though even I couldn't exactly make up what they were after. But, my eyes ! they rattled off the spun-yarn from he ball till they'd got a matter of half-a-dozen fathoms, when they passes the eend through three holes as they'd made in the canvass, and doubles the parts so as to middle 'em at the ould rat. Five or six on 'em stretched the spun-yarn along the deck so as to make straight the line, and a fellow claps his starn against the ould un in the canvass and backs him off in style. As soon as he was clear, the others walks up with the standing parts, and lowers him down into the barque in no time. "Oh—oh, my chaps," says I to myself, "is that your fun !—what, you're for emigrating to Canada, are you ! But I'm blessed if you shall work that traverse just now, at any rate !" So I jumps down and catches hould of a broomstick ; but they'd all started afore I could get to 'em, some under the booms, and some down the fore-hatch way—even the ould fellow had made a shift to get out of his slings and was off. I told the second mate next morning, and showed him the consarn, for I was afraid to say anything about it to the skipper, lest he might be angry at my letting such passengers aboard. The second mate laughed, and said "It was a sign of good luck, for them sort o' cattle always knew a tight ship and what sort of a voyage she was to make." And sure enough we'd a beautiful passage to the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and so we went up the river and delivered our cargo at Quebec. But the rats had sarved out provisions among 'em—not being over nice where they got it, and there was a Flemish account amongst the cabin stores. Well, they got to smoking 'em out ; but, Lord love you ! they cared no more for the smoke than I do for this glass :' and the gunner took a steady pull at his grog. 'Then they tried other schemes,' exclaimed he, 'but it wouldn't do, and "Mind my words," says the second mate, "we're all right as long as they'll stick by us." The skipper gets into a passion ; "I can't think where the thieves have come from," says he ; and you may be sure I didn't tell him, for it warn't very safe in them times for a foremast man to pull athwart hawse of his captain, seeing as there was a slave-trade going on with the Whites as well as the Niggers.'

'You don't mean to say that they sold Europeans?' said Mr. Hector, in a tone of surprise and doubt.

'Ropeans, or not Ropeans,' returned the gunner, 'it mattered not what was the calling or the colour, if money was bid, money was taken, and the poor devil—I beg pardon, yer reverence—the unfortunate fellow—was sent off into the country, where he'd small chance of getting away. There was many a deep trick played at that time in England to get rid of troublesome customers ;—they called 'em apprentices, but it was ould Bellzebub's claw as signed the indentures.'

'I have read of such things,' responded Mr. Hector, 'but I did not altogether believe them.'

'It's true, yer reverence ; and when I've finished about the rats, why, mayhap, if you've no objections, I'll just overhaul a few *antidotes* from the log of memory on that there score.'

'You interest and instruct me, Mr. Blocks,' returned the clergyman. 'I shall be most happy to hear you,—for those that go down to the sea in ships, as the Psalmist says, do indeed see wonders.

'And the gentleman says right too,' assented Blocks, 'let him have been in what sarvice he will—for he must have washed his hands in salt water to have found it out correctly. But, in regard o' the rats, the skipper was puzzled what to do, till one day he brings off a bag, and "mew, mew," went a tortoiseshell mouser, and she was cast loose to pick up the picaroon-ing wagabones as had plundered the captain's stores. "The skipper's let the cat out o' the bag," says the second mate ; "but, to my thinking, he'd better have left her ashore. Howsomever, we shall soon see : if all's square, they'll stick by us, spite of the skipper's insult ; but if we're a doomed craft, they'll want no cat to rouse 'em out,—rats never stay by a sinking ship." Well, yer reverence, there was now and then a bit of a squall atwixt the two—that's the cat and the rats ; but puss didn't do much in

the way of man-handling 'em, though she made two or three squeak for their lives.'

'Vot a moosh long tale!' said Eugenia, growing rather weary of such continued imposed restraint upon her tongue.

'It's about rats, my precious!' responded Blocks, 'and so you must make all due allowance for the length of their *tales*.—Well, yer reverence, one day, after we'd made a clean hold, we hauled alongside of a jetty, just to examine our bottom at low water; and there was a plank launched out from the ship's side to the quay, for a gangway ashore. It was mid-day, yer reverence, the people were getting their dinners, when the second mate hails us below. "They're off!" says he; "young uns and ould uns, there they go!—they've made their calculations, and worked up the dead-reckoning; and now the skipper may send his cat after 'em as soon as he pleases. I thought it ud be so; there they all go! Will, come and bid good-bye to your friends." I jumped up the hatchway, yer reverence, and there I saw about a score o' rats walking leisurely along the plank to the jetty; and one on 'em was blind and had got a bit of rattan in his mouth, and another was leading him by it. "There they go, Will!" says the second mate; "there they go, holus bolus, stock and fluke: and now the skipper may cross out my name from the ship's articles as soon as maybe's convenient." "Hadn't we better try and catch one or two of 'em?" says I: "we can make a cage to keep 'em in——," "And larn 'em to sing," says he: "that ud be very like a whale. No, no, my boy, there'd be no use in stopping 'em against their wills, for that ud be combustion—and combustion arn't of one's own accord, you know." Well, yer reverence, off they went, blind un and all; and when the skipper comes aboard, several of the people asked for their discharge. "Why, you're shipped for the voyage," says the captain, "and must go back in the *Jessy*, or not at all. But what makes you want to leave?" So they told him about the rats, and he called 'em a set of d—— fools—saving yer clergyman's presence—and ordered 'em forud: but they all seemed determined to run any risk rather than go to sea in the craft. Well, at low water we examines the bottom, and everything seemed tight and sound enough; but still the people warn't by no manner o' means satisfied, in the regard of the disembarkation of the rats; and after we had hauled off, and by the time we were ready to sail again, most of 'em had contrived to slip their cables out of the skipper's way. Howsomever, the second mate was a bit of a dare-devil happy-go-lucky sort of a chap, and says he, "I tell you what it is, Will, the skipper may laugh and call it all nonsense, but I'm blow'd if we arn't regularly in for a sneezer—and he may log it down, if he likes, that I say so. What'll be the upshot of the thing? why, we've no traverse-tables as we can find the bearings and distance by; but as sure as my mother had me christened by the ugly name of Jack, so sure sumut ull happen. But never strike your colours, my boy, whilst there's a shot in the locker; never say die whilst there's a ray of courage in your heart. I won't desart the skipper, anyhow, come dog, come devil,"—saving your clargy's presence; but it's just as Jack said it,—"come dog, come—" the same over again—"I'll have a slap at it. Will you stand by me, my bould un?" Well, yer reverence, I promised I would; and then says he, "All square, Will; let's have a toothful of grog over it."'

Whether this was a mere excuse for filling his own glass, or that, being reminded of the circumstance, he was led to give greater effect to his narrative by way of illustration,—or whether he acted mechanically,—the motive must remain unknown: certain it is, that a good stiff nor'-wester passed that way where many a good stiff nor'-wester had gone before. He then continued:—'Well, yer reverence, we sailed again about the middle of December,—blowing weather, and as cold as a snow-ball,—and we took our departure from Cape Race with a spanking breeze at nor'-west. "Where's yer rats and their mischief now?" says the skipper; but the second mate never said nothing to him, though says he to me, "Will, we arn't half-way home yet—he boasts of a dry jacket afore he is out of the water." Howsomever, we did pretty fair, sometimes fair weather, but mostly foul, till we got about thirty-four west longitude, and then it came on to blow great guns.'

'You do not mean literally so?' said Mr. Hector, looking at the young folks.

'Letterally or not,' responded the gunner, 'it was as heavy a gale as ever I was in; and the barque being deep, the sea made a clean breach over her; though, being mostly timber-laden, we hadn't much fear of Davy Jones's locker, unless she broke up. It lasted a whole week, and our bowsprit and fore and main topmasts went overboard, and there we laid at the marcy of the winds and waves—one wetting us through and through every minute, and the other blowing us dry again. The cold was dreadful; we rolled about like a log—the water-casks fetched way and got staved, and provisions began to run short, for the bread was soaked in the briny helement; we couldn't keep a bit of fire to cook by, and some on us had frozen limbs, till at last all got so weak that we could scarcely handle the ropes. We kept a reefed foresel, a main staysel, and a trysel on her; but one night the foresel blew clean out of the bolt-ropes, and we hadn't the power to clear the wreck. Day after day we laid, the wind dead at nor'-east—ice hanging about the rigging—the hould half full of water, and the timber beginning to send fore and aft, so as to threaten to start a butt-end of some of the planks. The skipper fell ill and took to his bed, and very few but the second-mate and myself were able to crawl about out of sixteen persons. We had, all hands, been put on a short allowance of grub, and the wind lulling, the cook was able to light a fire, and we

made two or three pretty fair meals, and kept our course; then it fell a stark calm with a heavy swell, and the craft having but little above board to steady her, walloped in the trough of the sea —put out our fire, and at last rolled away the foremast, which we cut clear. In three or four days' time we caught light baffling winds, and next a steady breeze from the nor'-east; but we could only lay her to under the main-staysel. At last, we were reduced to two ounces of bread and a pint of water a man for twenty-four hours, with now and then a little drop of corn brandy. The skipper never left his bed—indeed, he was nearly blind; but the people behaved themselves like men, and were always obedient to command. Daily was our small allowance diminished—hunger and thirst began to make us quarrelsome, and look wolfish at one another; we had only a little water and a few pounds of bread left, when the second-mate at daybreak went on deck, and we heard him shout, "Sail ho!" and all hands crawled up—even the captain got out of his cot, making sure that deliverance was at hand. It's hard lines, yer reverence, to have every day a banyan-day, and scarcely anything to eat in it—hour after hour the stomach ravening for food, and the parched throat for a little water—and shipmates' eyes glaring on you as if they could gnaw your flesh and suck your blood. Many's the delicious dream I had, fancying myself at a plentiful feast and enjoying every luxury—drinking clear water from the vagrant stream, or clapping my mouth to the bunghole of a cask—sometimes cutting off rich slices from a roast leg of pork, or making my mark in a rib-bone of beef, and then to wake almost famished—the vision fled, and starvation, with his maddening leer, staring in my face.—Oh, yer reverence, it was horrible—horrible!'

'It must have been, indeed, my worthy friend, overwhelming to the mind, but for the support of that Being whom the winds and waves obey,' said the clergyman, feelingly. 'But the strange sail—the ship that hove in sight —what of her?'

'It warn't a ship—it was a brig,' replied the gunner. 'She neared us fast, and seeing help so close aboard of us, we consumed our whole remaining stock, except about two gallons of brandy, and two or three of rum, and a cask of wine. Faces that hadn't had a smile on 'em for many days, now again looked cheerful—wrangling ceased, and we congratulated each other on the prospect of being snatched from death. We hoisted a signal of distress at the peak; and the captain sends for us all down into the cabin, and returned thanks to God A'mighty, in a prayer as would ha' done credit to any archbishop in the sarvice.'

'I'm very glad of that,' said Mr. Hector: 'gratitude to our Maker is the bounden duty of every one. Perhaps, had you prayed sooner, you would have had earlier relief.'

'Prayed sooner, yer reverence?' reiterated Blocks in something like amazement. 'Well, mayhap it mightn't be praying, according to book larning; but if ever poor devils cried arnestly for marcy, it was the crew of the barque. There warn't much fuss made about it, to be sure; but some on 'em had been sorry blackguards in the way of getting drunk and kicking up sprees ashore, and in course they felt the prickings of conscience as well as the hungry belly, and they were always crying out to be saved. As for the second-mate, he took everything coolly; and I, being but a youngster, was much obligated to him, for many a litt he give me by way of encouragement, to keep soul and body sailing in company: and now, when the brig was not more nor a mile off, and I was just expressing my joy at the thought of soon obtaining relief, he solemnly answered, "Don't be too expectful, Will; there's no accounting for broken crockery in a squall."—Well, yer reverence, I felt angry with him, but I didn't never say nothing, for there was always a somut about the man that seemed as if he could see further than other people, and so I held my tongue; but he warn't cheerful like the rest, and his countenance was as gloomy as the dark cloud that forebodes a storm. As the stranger came nigher and nigher, eager expectation increased; and when she passed within hail, heard our deplorable story, and promised to render us help, we tried to cheer, but it was more like the moaning of wind-gusts through the trees in a churchyard, and we resembled spectres rather than men. We couldn't muster strength enough to get our boat out, for the starn-boat had been washed away; so the skipper of the brig said he would send us his, but it wanted a little repairs first. He told us he was short of provisions himself, but he would spare us some bread and water, and whatever he could.—Well, yer reverence, it stirred us up to energy, and, by dint of hard labour, we turned to at the pumps and lightened her of a great deal of water, and should, perhaps, have cleared her, but that all hands became exhausted and were obligated to give in. The stranger brought the wind with him from the eastard; but just as we had knocked off pumping, it chopped right round to the westard, and he reached away from us. Some thought he was only keeping to windard —others gazed in silence—yet none believed that he would leave us altogether to perish, but they saw him making sail and every hour lessening to the sight. When he came only just to be seen like a dim speck upon the verge of the horizon, then arose wild cries and lamentations; then did disappointment sink into unutterable despair—the mind gave way under the sudden change—the men flew to the liquor and got drunk; and whilst some were praying to the A'mighty for deliverance, others mingled their expressions of distress with oaths and curses. It was a dreadful scene, yer reverence! The second-mate, though a devil-may-care sort of a chap, wouldn't touch the liquor, nor would he let me. He contrived to light a little bit of fire, and mulled some wine, which we shared with the skipper, for the chief-mate was as bad as any of the men; and collecting all the articles we could muster which was likely to appease

hunger, there was part of a bullock's hide, about four pounds of candles, and a gallon of lamp-oil, the cat reduced almost to a skeleton, and the pump-leather. Well, the cat was killed and sarved out in equal pieces the next day; and I declare, yer reverence, I never eat a morsel with more relish in my life than that which I picked from the breast of poor puss. Nor were there wanting remarks about the rats; but nobody said much, for it was a sore place to some on 'em. Howsomever, the wind being westerly and the water more smooth, we got her away nearly before it, stepped the long-boat's mast in the windlass, and hoisted the sail, and the barque travelled along at the rate of three knots an hour, and those who were able to stand took their spell at the helm. This renewed our hopes a little; for if the breeze continued, we were likely to be carried into the track of the West Ingeeman. But, alas! another gale came on from the nor'ard, with hard frost; every eatable was consumed—candles, oil, all were gone, and we passed the long dreary stormy nights of sixteen and seventeen hours in utter darkness, huddled together in the steerage, imploring the A'mighty to help us, yet feeling reckless of existence. Such was our condition about the middle of January, and no one paid the smallest attention to the craft but the second-mate; indeed, had she been laden with any other cargo, nothing would have saved her, but the timber kept her buoyant even after the water had risen to the lower deck. But it was disheartening and moloncholy, in them dismal and dreadful nights, to hear the dashing of the waves as they broke over us—the moaning of the pent-up wind in the hould—the groaning of the poor craft as she writhed between the seas, and the howling of the gale as it swept above our heads, all mingling in one terrible threat to send us to the bottom: and yet, yer reverence, in the midst of all this, whilst the hand of the A'mighty showed itself in power and punishment, men were setting all warning at defiance by getting beastly intoxicated: and the mate, who ought to have set a good example to the rest, was the worst among 'em. Now, yer reverence, I never yet believed that because one chap might be a rogue—saving yer presence—that the Great Being sent a storm just merely to frighten the fellow, because, d'ye mind, it's sarved out to all alike, and there may be a dozen worthy souls to one rascal; but it certainly was curious to hear some of my shipmates confessing and bemoaning their sins—and by their own calculations they had no small share logged down again 'em, and they kept crying out that they were Jonases and should be swallowed up for their wickedness—that the storm was sent to punish 'em: and one wanted the mate to throw him overboard, that the gale might break up. Now, the mate being mad groggy,—or rather mulled winey, for t'other stuff was gone,—catches him up in his arms, and was about to pitch him over the quarter just as if he'd been a dipsy lead; but the second-mate stopped him from committing the murder, and bundled 'em both below again.—It's surprising, yer reverence, how men who are hourly hazarding existence—I say it's surprising to see how hard they hould on by the life-lines, taking in every morsel of slack that they can gather, and getting a severe turn by way of belaying all they can haul in upon. The suffering by famine warn't nothing compared to the dread of death.'

'Although we ought at all times to be prepared for our latter end,' said the clergyman, 'yet it seems to be a wise ordination of Providence that men should place an inestimable value on existence—it is the best gift of the Creator, and once destroyed, is gone for ever.'

'Mayhap so, yer reverence,' returned Blocks, 'for I take it you're better skilled in them things than I can be; but it did seem strange that whilst they were hourly expecting it, and knew it must come some time or other, yet the nearer it approached, the more they were terrified. I can't exactly explain my meaning, perhaps, only I've felt more uneasiness afore going into action than when we got to hard hammering; and in this here case aboard the *Jessy*, the second-mate laid himself down as calmly to sleep as if nothing at all was the matter. And it was really a moloncholy sight to see the poor withering wretches dying by inches, some like moving skeletons, and others with their flesh swelled and bloated as if they'd lived on plenty. At last, there were red eyes and ravening glares, and grinding of the teeth, as they looked upon one another; and the mate having cut his arm with a hatchet, he sucked his own blood, and it made him laugh with such savage fierceness as rendered him more like a devil than a human being: and then he stared at one and stared at another with the eagerness of a famished tiger; but he said nothing, though it was plain enough to be seen what his thoughts were. And they all sat silently clutching their hands, and snatching their breath, as if each had something to communicate, but dared not clothe their thoughts in words—then there was an indistinct muttering of doing the best to save their lives, till it came to a question of—*what was* best?

'"Here we are, nineteen of us starving, perishing," said the mate, who had been drinking more wine and was inflamed: "if we continue thus a few days longer, what is there before us? Wouldn't it be better for one"—and he stopped a minute or two, for all expected what was coming next, and shuddered, though the very thought made them more eager for food. At length, says he, "D—— all ceremony! one must die that the rest may live."—It was a fearful moment, yer reverence: there we were, all but the captain, down in the steerage, hungering for each other's flesh, and none on us knowing which might be the victim. The second-mate said nothing, but the rest kept mumbling about drawing lots, and the carpenter said he'd a couple of dice as would do to throw; but the second-mate said, "he'd be no partner to use the devil's bones when the life of a Christian was the stake." At last, the chief-mate and two or three others went into the cabin to consult

the captain, who wouldn't listen to 'em or have any hand in it, but requested them all to come aft whilst he read the Bible and went to prayers. They said, "it was of no manner of use, all the prayers in the Psalm-book wouldn't appease their hunger, they'd come to the determination of casting lots, and if he wouldn't give his sanction, they'd do it without," and returned to the steerage again. So they made all ready, with a dreadful eagerness, as if they wanted to put the matter beyond doubt ; and it was agreed that the second mate should prepare eighteen (for we left the captain out)—eighteen pieces of rope-yarn—sixteen on 'em exactly of equal lengths—one a little shorter, and another a little shorter still. Whoever drew the first lot was to be clear, the second was death, and the third the man who was to do the deed. The bights were to be shoved through a crack in the bulk-head from the steward's store-room, and everyone was to draw his yarn. Well, it was done, and all hands were placed in the steerage, with almost bursting eyes looking at what must be a death-warrant to one of them ; but when it came to the push, there was a reluctance to draw, and the second mate, says he, "My lads, suppose we wait till to-morrow morning afore we proceed any further ; let us leave the lots where they are for to-night, and try what may come to our fishing-gear"—for we'd had the hooks out several days. "We've stood it thus far ; surely we may weather it out a few hours longer." But those who had been the most reluctant to draw, now again became the most eager ; though at last it was agreed to wait over another night. The mate was very much again it ; and when it was decided, he made himself mad drunk, quarrelling and fighting with anybody as was near him. At last he struck the carpenter a severe blow, and was knocked down insensible. This conduct seemed worse than all, that at the very time when horrible misfortune was crushing all of us with the same weight, anyone should be trying to make the affliction heavier by vengeance against a fellow-sufferer. Darkness came on, and we'd caught no fish, seen no prospect of help, so that another daylight would be the last that was to dawn upon a shipmate—which was then unknown, though each might fancy it would be himself. That was a dreadful night, yer reverence—a night of groans and tears, and lamentations ; and it was about the close of the first watch that somebody came down below from the upper deck, but nobody axed him any questions or spoke—all hands, except the look-out, were in their berths, thinking of the dreadful deed of the morrow. All at once there was a scuffling in the steerage, and a sort of gurgling sound like water blowing through a pump ; but not a word was spoke—though two or three heavy sighs were heard as if a person was trying to keep his heart from rising ; but soon all was quiet again, and the men were too much engaged in thinking of themselves to take much notice of anything else. The second mate and I was to have the middle watch, and the weather was much finer and even warmer than it had been for some time before, and the barque remained pretty steady and quiet. The chief mate had the first watch ; but he warn't on deck when we went up, so we supposed he had gone to his cabin—for I must tell you he left the steerage when he recovered from the blow which the carpenter had given him. Well, I and the second mate crouched ourselves together under the trysel, for we couldn't walk, and every now and then one on us looked out to see if we could see anything ; and at eight bells—that's four o'clock in the morning, yer reverence—I went below to rouse out the carpenter to take the morning watch ; so I goes to his berth and gives him a shake, but he never took no notice ; and then I shakes him again, but still he never answered, and I thought there was a lumpish heaviness about his body as warn't altogether nat'ral or ship-shape, and "Yo-hoy, ould chips !" says I, "it's past eight bells." Well, finding he warn't inclined to turn out, I began to suspect there was somut the matter with him, and so I feels up his breast towards his face, and there was a great deal of slimy wet about his shirt-collar ; but, Oh God ! I shall never forget the sensation that came over me when, on feeling his neck, I found that his throat was cut in such a dreadful manner, that his head was more than half severed from his body.'

'Horrible ! horrible !' said Mr. Hector, shuddering. '"Lord, what is man that thou art mindful of him ?" So the poor fellow had destroyed himself ?'

'Not by no manner o' means, yer reverence,' returned Blocks with solemnity. 'But let me go on in my own way, if you please, unless you're wearying of hearing of so much wretchedness and misery.'

'It certainly is anything but a gratifying narrative, Mr. Blocks,' responded the clergyman ; 'but there may be many useful lessons gleaned from it. When I feel dissatisfied at my lot hereafter, I shall recall your sufferings to my mind, and the contrast must fill my heart with gratitude to God. Pray, let me hear the result ; and I hope these young folks will treasure what they hear in mind.'

'Well, yer reverence,' continued the gunner, 'when I found that the poor onfortunate carpenter was dead, I didn't make any noise, but I goes up to the second mate and tells him ; and says he, "Will, say nothing about it below. Come, it's pretty warm here ; creep under again, and let's wait till daylight." So I stows myself away again : and about eight o'clock, just as light began to struggle against the gloom, we saw the chief mate come on deck and look carefully and cautiously round him ; and he draws a bucket of water, and was going to wash his hands, when my companion gets from under the trysel and goes towards him. "Watson," says he, "you're a murderer !" Oh, how his eyes glared ! and there was damning testimony on his hands and clothes, which were darkly stained with gore. "How dare

you call me by such a name?" says he. "Because you deserve it," answers the second mate: "it was you who cut poor Davis's throat; and though we may none of us live to bring you to earthly punishment, yet there is a Judge, before whom you will shortly have to appear, whose condemnation will be sure." "Leave me to settle that affair," says Watson: "but by what right or on what grounds do you tax me with the crime?" "Your hands are evidence again you," said the second mate: "and let me ax you whose knife is this?" and he shows the chief mate's knife as sharp as a razure, and covered with blood. The villain made a snatch at the knife, but the second mate kept him off; and then Watson took up the hatchet and tried to cut him down, but missed; and they grappled together, and wrestled for mastery, till they got near the starboard chesstree, where the bulwarks had been washed away and the deck was flush out with the sea. The chief mate was by far the strongest man, and I could see he was dragging his hangtagonist to the side to pitch him overboard; and so I rouses out from under the trysel, hardly knowing what to do, but determined to try and save my friend. So I looks about for something or other to knock Watson down, and I grabs hould of the bar of the companion-hatch; but afore I could get alongside of 'em, the barque gave a roll to starboard—I heard a heavy splash amid the wash of the sea, and in the increasing light saw them in the white foam, still keeping up the deadly strife in the waters. I hailed 'em down in the steerage, to say the mates were overboard; but though I heard them turning out, not a soul came on deck. I hurries as fast as I could to the gangway again, and there they were beneath the surface, still clinging to and struggling with each other, till they both disappeared; and I fell down in agony, and clung with my arm round the stancheon to keep from being washed away. I felt sick; a dizziness comed over me. I couldn't see for several minutes; but I thought somebody passed their arm over mine, and spoke to me softly and soothingly. It roused me up; I looked, and there was the second mate half in-board, and half out, quite exhausted, but houlding on by the stancheon with the hardiness of a last death-grip. With what little strength I had left, I caught up the eend of the maintopsel clewline, and passing it round him, took three or four turns to the stancheon, and then crawls to the hatchway, and begs some of 'em in the steerage to come and help me, but none on 'em would stir; and presently the captain comes up, but he was obligated to go upon his hands and knees, and the second mate recovering his senses a bit, after a great deal of labour and trouble, we got him aboard and laid him under the trysel. I gave him a little wine; the cook made a shift to light a fire, and in about half-an-hour I saw the men coming on deck with lumps of flesh, which they ate half-roasted, half-raw. Ate, did I say? They tore it like dogs with their teeth, and quarrelled and fought to get near the grate. I knew what it was—my very soul loathed it; but, oh, yer reverence, the gnawings of hunger, now heightened by seeing others at a banquet, overpowered all disgust, and going forud, I begged a piece o' the carpenter and made a hearty meal. I carried some to the second mate, who chewed but did not swallow it, and for a short time we all found ourselves strengthened. It was a dead calm; the sun shone upon us this day, and each took a little warm wine and became more rational. The *remains* of the carpenter were brought on deck; and as there was plenty of salt, some on 'em cut up the flesh, and taking out the bones, it was put into pickle. The skipper wouldn't touch a bit of it, especially as we told him the poor fellow had been murdered. The second mate was silent as to his manner of escape from the conflict; but we soon had the mystery solved: for as it still remained calm, the body of Watson floated on the surface, with his own knife sticking in his throat. The thing had been done in self-defence. I had witnessed the affray; the dastardly conduct of the chief mate to the carpenter all conspired in favour of my friend, and he was cordially congratulated on having conquered. Howsomever, we got the villain alongside, and in a couple of hours the murderer was in the same pickle-cask along with the man he had murdered.'

'Strange and wonderful vicissitude!' exclaimed Mr. Hector; 'that was indeed astonishing retribution! There is a plain and simple fidelity in your narrative that makes the heart sick.'

'Yer reverence had best take a little grog,' said Blocks, refilling his glass and drinking. 'I feels a little squawmish myself when I thinks about the consarn. Mayhap I'd better leave off?'

'By no means,' returned the clergyman, whose curiosity had been greatly excited. 'In fact, I could not rest without becoming acquainted with the means of your deliverance.'

'Well, I'll go on then, if you please,' said Blocks, adding more daylight to his grog. 'We'd now plenty of meat, such as it was; but we'd no water,—and thirst is harder to be borne than hunger. Howsomever, we had still half a cask of wine; and the second mate got the cook to boil salt water as much as he could, putting the body of a shirt over the pot, which, when it became soaked with steam, was wrung into a pannikin, and we got about a quart of brackish stuff in a day. After the death of the mate, the men became more orderly, and the calm continuing, we contrived by short spells at the pumps to get out a good deal of the water; but at the end of a week it came on to blow again, and the people's limbs swelled and broke out into dreadful wounds owing to the onnat'ral food they subsisted on. The gale came down heavier and heavier; the sea rolled and raged, and tumbled over us,—washed away the boat from the deck—indeed, made a clean sweep of everything, pickle-cask and all; so that what was left of the mate and the carpenter was carried into

the ocean, where mayhap it may be floating about to this day. Death seemed certain : the poor barque, though a sound craft, could not resist the buffetings and batterings she constantly got, and began to break up. We had no canvas abroad, for it was all blown to shreds, and nobody kept the deck ; so that she lay on the waters like a huge coffin containing living skeletons. Sometimes one and then another would drag up their tortured limbs just to look round ; but despair began to prevail, and two of our number expired raving mad, whilst the rest were unable to get their bodies upon deck. The hould was filled with water up to the beams, and the timber getting an increase of weight by suction, we were soon up to our knees in the steerage. Ravening hunger again attacked us. The yarns still remained in the crack of the bulkhead, and often and often the eyes would wander to them as a sort of fixed point. To be sure, there were the dead bodies ; but the state in which they died made everyone fear a similar malady, and so they were left untouched. The weather moderated, and having nothing to do, the people got talking about home, which they never expected to see again, and wives and children from whom they supposed themselves parted for ever. Oh, what grief and pain, and tribulation and bemoaning succeeded each other, hour after hour, as memory pictured past enjoyments, which, they said, they thought but little of at the time! And then there were agonising cries for marcy every now and then bursting out, till the throats got swelled and parched, and the numbers daily grew thinner. It was indeed dreadful, yer reverence, to look upon the blackening corpses with which we were compelled to hold companionship, and to feel a certainty that we should soon be like them.'

'The situation you describe is now present to my imagination,' said the clergyman, 'and it chills my blood to contemplate it. What, then, must the reality have been! And yet you were saved—snatched like a brand from the burning.'

'No, yer reverence, there warn't no possibility of burning : the craft was too deep in the water and too much soaked to take fire,' urged the gunner in reply.

'My allusion was scriptural,' answered the clergyman, inclined to smile at the worthy tar's mistake, but restrained by the awfulness of the calamity he was describing.

'Mayhap so—mayhap so,' returned Will quietly ; 'I can't hould much upon that tack, seeing as I arn't skilled in Scriptural delusions ; but I don't think none on us would have burned, dry as we all were ;' and he took a small supply from his glass. 'But there we were, anyhow, day after day getting weaker. One afternoon I made a shift to drag myself into the captain's cabin, just to see how he was weathering it, for nobody hadn't been nigh-hand him for three days.'

'And was he all that time alone?' inquired Mr. Hector, who lost not a word of what was uttered, so intensely were his feelings excited.

'Entirely alone!' returned Blocks; 'and when I eased myself off slowly down the companion-ladder and went into the cabin, he laid on his back perfectly still, with his eyes fixed, and his hands folded on his breast ; so I thought he had tripp'd his anchor of life, and had made sail for snugger moorings ; but when I got alongside of his cot, I saw his lips were moving, and he'd an open Bible under his hands—he was at prayers. "I am dying, Will!" said he, as he tried to move on his side ; "a few hours more, and the storms of existence will be over! May the great God be a parent to the fatherless, and the friend of the widow!" His thoughts were lingering on his home. What could I say to him?—there was no hope ; but I could him just to hould on as long as he could, because we were all out'ard-bound as well as himself, and it ud be better for all hands to sail in company, as the skipper, having most larning, would understand which was the best tack to stand on if so be we should happen to have a foul wind. "Here's a compass and a chart, Will," says he, houlding up the book ; and he overhauled a great many comfortable things, which made quite a lull in my heart. To be sure, I was but young, and I trusted that I hadn't been much of a scamp ; but there was somut unsartin about death that made me feel quite timbersome. "There is, indeed, no hope but this, Will," says he; "and when I'm gone, take it to the steerage, and let them read the pages I have turned down." Well, yer reverence, just at this moment in comes the second-mate ; and there was a wildness in his eye, and he seemed gasping for breath, that both the skipper and I thought he was mad ; and as there was somut in his hand which looked like a weapon, I thought, mayhap, hunger had made him crazy, and he would try and kill one of us. The skipper thought so too, for he dropped the Bible, and catches up a pistol that laid by his side to defend himself. But the second-mate stopped short under the skylight, and then we saw that what we had took for a weapon was his spy-glass ; and he stood there houlding on by the table, and trembling, till at last he burst out a-crying like a child. "What is it? speak!" says the skipper ; "don't deceive me—speak!—it is—it is—" "A sail!" says the second-mate. "And how is she standing?" eagerly axed the skipper. "To the best of my belief, towards us," answers the second-mate. The skipper rose up, and we got him 'pon deck, where every sowl as could move soon mustered —eleven out of nineteen. The stranger was plain enough to be seen ; but our eyes were so bad, that it was a long time afore we could make out what course she was steering, till at last the second-mate declared that she was running to the nor'-nor'-east, and would pass about six miles ahead of us. Now, we knew he couldn't miss but see us ; yet, in the state we were in, he might belike take the barque for a desarted wreck, and not come to our aid. Oh! yer reverence, how dreadful was the suspense of them horrors! for the wind was light, and in a couple of hours it would be dark. I can't

describe what we suffered; but I know the captain read a prayer for help, and we all repeated it after him word for word. Well, when we had yet half an hour's good daylight, the stranger was right ahead; but she came nigher to us than the second-mate calculated upon, as she couldn't then be more than a league off, and we made her out to be a large ship with painted ports and a poop. We tried to shout, but the hollow voices died away sullenly on the waters—we hadn't strength to get up the rigging; we'd no ensign or signal hilliards to hoist anything by, and we was afeard they wouldn't see us on the deck. Howsomever, the weather was clear, and so the second-mate gets a horn of powder and empties it on the windlass; and then he takes the captain's pistol and fires into the powder, and it blew up, and the smoke curled thick and high. "What do you see, Will?" says the skipper, eagerly, for he'd given me his glass and my eye was fixed upon the ship. "There's nothing, sir," says I; "all remains the same as afore. Yet, avast a bit! there's a somut red over the quarter—there it goes aloft!—she sees us, sir—she sees us!—she's hoisted her ensign!—" Oh, yer reverence! who can describe the joy the sight of that bit o' bunting give us! not a sowl spoke, but every man dropped on his knees, and the great Sarcher of hearts heard the silent swell of gratitude. The ship altered her course—she got within a mile of us—daylight was rapidly declining, and it fell a stark calm. Doubt and uncertainty again came over our minds—there was a sudden change from joy to torturing anxiety—a breeze might spring up after dark, and she might leave us to our fate. I still kept my eye upon the craft, and, oh! how my very heart did dance when I saw a boat shove off from the stranger and pull towards us! "Thank God," says I, "we're saved!" And so we was, yer reverence; though ounly eight ever saw the land again. As for the barque, poor thing! we left her alone on the ocean, and were very kindly received aboard the *Ganges* East Ingeeman, which had parted company from her convoy in a gale o' wind, and had been driven by bad weather and heavy sailing bodily down into the nor'-west. Thus, yer reverence may say, that a fine craft was abandoned and eleven men lost their lives all in regard o' them there rats.'

The clergyman was about to reply; but Mr. Brief's gig at that moment drove up to the gate, and he immediately hastened out to receive him. The man of the law expressed himself much pleased with the appearance of our hero, and after dinner the subject of his future prospects was discussed, when it was finally agreed upon that he should commence his career in the service of his country; and the gunner having already obtained Captain Yorick's consent to give the youngster a cruise, 'just to see how he'd take to it,' it was finally arranged that he should return with his foster-parent and be fitted out for the undertaking.

Melancholy was the parting between young Ten and the pretty Hollander, though why they should feel so much neither of them could exactly tell, especially as there was a prospect of their soon meeting again. But so it was; and though anxious to make his way in the world, yet he could not forbear shedding tears that night as he laid his head upon the pillow at the Roaring Boreas: and Eugenia felt as if she had lost her best and dearest friend.

CHAPTER III.

'All on board of a man of war.'

It was a new scene to young Ten-thousand when, on the following morning, he embarked with his benefactor to join his ship. Yet the love of novelty, so natural to boyhood, and the aspirings of hope as the prospect of honour lay before him, were of too pleasing a character to admit of melancholy feelings. Henceforward he was to be devoted to his country, and a glow of pride freshened on his cheeks. The *Scratchee* was lying in Plymouth Sound, at no great distance from the spot where Will had first encountered him in the shore-boat; and though there was for a moment a hasty sensation of sickening desire to know the cause of his thus being mercilessly cast adrift, yet it speedily vanished as he mounted the side-steps and passed over the gangway. 'Come along, young Six-foot!' said Mr. Blocks, giving the lad a rather rough lug by the arm, that somewhat embarrassed him; and they advanced to the quarter-deck, where stood an officer, tall and stout, with a quick full eye that seemed to let nothing escape him, rather manly than handsome in features, with black curling hair escaping from beneath a three-corned cocked-up hat; but his legs destroyed the fine effect which was produced on the mind by the herculean proportions of the upper part of his frame; they were, as he used to style them himself, 'trap-sticks.' Where he got them, and how he came to have a line-of-battle ship's figure-head and bows, to a gun-brig's stern, must remain amongst those occurrences that have never yet nor ever will be elucidated.

'I've come aboard, sir,' said Blocks, raising his hat from his head, and addressing the person he mentioned, 'and made bould to bring the youngster with me, sir.'

'Ay, I see,' returned the captain, eyeing the youth with a rapid scrutiny; 'never been in the lee-scuppers yet, I think you said?'

'No, sir,' replied the gunner, 'this will be his first trip; and I'm thinking, sir, he'll be none the worse for dipping his hand in a tar-bucket.'

'None—none at all; if he's a good lad, we'll see what can be done for him,' responded the captain. 'What age is he?'

'It's now just fourteen years since I first came athwart him, sir,' answered Blocks; 'and I hopes by dint of a little tuteration to make him turn out a seaman.'

'Ay, ay, you'll do right to *tuterate* him,' said the captain, giving one of his rapid glances. 'What's his name?'

'Ten-thousand Topsail-sheet Blocks,' re-

turned the gunner somewhat proudly at the idea of his own penetration in the way of christening.

'And a devilish good name, too,' responded the captain, 'but rather too much hammered out. We must call him Young Blocks, for shortness. And now, my lad, keep your weather eye up; don't get to play instead of minding the ship's duty. Look smart, and d—— the dog that bit the barber! Pray, Mr. Blocks, are all your stores on board?'

'Everything, sir, and stowed away,' answered the gunner; but if we could get another match-tub or two, sir, and a hand-bible, we should be all the better.'

'Good! good! the cooper shall make the first, and we'll get the other from the dockyard when we return,' replied the captain and then shouting loudly, 'Unmoor ship!' the boatswain and his mates summoned the people to that duty.

'I have a small Bible in my chest,' said young Blocks to the gunner as they walked forward; 'and all that I have you're welcome to: it was given me by Mr. Hector, and though I shouldn't like to part with it altogether, yet it will always be at your service.'

'Keep your Bible, my lad,' uttered the gunner seriously, and surprised at the observation; 'and you shall read it to me at proper times on Sundays. But what made you overhaul that in your talk just now!'

'Because I heard you tell the captain you wanted one,' answered the boy.

'Who—I?' exclaimed Blocks; 'I talk to the skipper about Bibles! I should as soon think of axing him to let me spin a parson's yarn to the ship's company when they rigs out the church.'

'I thought you said something about a hand-bible,' uttered the youngster diffidently.

'Oh, ay! why, Lord love your heart! so I did,' acknowledged Blocks; 'but them consarns as we call hand-bibles are small axes, kept for particular purposes.'

'O—ho!' returned the lad, both enlightened and surprised at the designation given to such an instrument.

The *Scratchee* was what was termed one of the donkey-class of frigates, an eight-and-twenty cramped up in her proportions as if the projector had only in view the inconvenience of the men at their quarters, or thought that a little saving of wood and iron was to atone for every imperfection: still, to young Blocks, who had never been to sea, it was a matter of perfect indifference, and he followed his patron down to his cabin. The confined abode, where darkness was made manifest by the rays emanating from a purser's dip, was rather appalling to one who had sweetly enjoyed the clear light of heaven and freely ranged the fields: a thought—it might be a comparison—presented itself in the parsonage-house he had so recently left, and the rough sturdy men who were hastening to their stations formed a striking contrast to the kind and gentle beings he had so lately parted from. Tears chased each other down his cheeks; but they fell unobserved, and the admonitions of Mr. Hector recalled him to greater firmness and energy. In another hour they were passing the Mew Stone, with a beautiful breeze; and when night spread its shades upon the bosom of the waters, Ushant lights were seen dancing upon the verge of the horizon.

A few days made young Blocks perfectly contented with his lot. He had not been stationed by the first lieutenant in any particular watch, or to any especial duty, and he enjoyed the free range of the frigate—every man treating him with affability, however homely, on account of his situation. Active and nimble, he could go aloft as smart as a topman; and the seamen, ever anxious and proud to give instruction to one so desirous of learning, taught him many things which it was necessary to know. The lieutenants took but little notice of him at first—and the midshipmen quizzed him on account of his queer name—whilst the boys, though somewhat under the awe of the boatswain's rattan, were spitefully jealous that a youngster of their own class should have so much indulgence. But still the youth was far from idle, and though none could find fault with his conduct, yet he perceived that he was held in no very great estimation by those who ought to have been the first to perceive his good qualities. The master, however, a rough knot of the old school, very early became his friend, and Captain Yorick not unfrequently gave him a word of encouragement.

One lovely evening about an hour before sunset, Ten-thousand went up into the mizen-top to sketch the Glenan Isles, off which the frigate was then lying. On descending again after completing his task, the captain was walking the quarter-deck, and eyed him rather sternly. 'The skipper has been sending all over the ship for you,' whispered one of the quartermasters: 'bear a hand aft, and, mind, dowse your truck and show your manners.'

Away went the youngster, unconscious of having offended, yet apprehensive that something was wrong, which was not lessened by catching a glimpse of the gunner's face, on which anxiety and vexation were vividly depicted. The captain, however, had gone below to his cabin, and thither the lad was directed to follow him by the officer of the watch. He found the commander sitting at his table with a letter before him, which he took up and abruptly asked, 'Pray, young man, is this your writing?'

The lad gave one look, and a sickly sensation came over his heart: it was a letter containing a description of the officers, from the chief downward, and a sort of journal of their proceedings, which he intended forwarding to Mr. Hector. 'Yes, sir,' said he, 'it is mine.'

'For what purpose was it thrown down into my cabin, and by whom?' inquired the captain harshly.

'How it came into your possession, sir, I really cannot tell,' answered the youth: 'it was in my waistcoat-pocket previous to my going aloft, and perhaps, has——'

'—Worked out whilst you were in the rigging,' said the captain, his countenance assuming a milder expression. 'And now, if you were in my place, what would you do with it?'

'If I had not already read it, sir,' returned the youngster, with more boldness, 'I should return it unread.'

'The devil you would!' exclaimed the captain, reddening up. 'And how could you know whom it belonged to, and the purpose for which it was sent into your hands, without opening it? Here is no direction, and I was led to guess the writer by what is *there* contained. Now, hear me, boy,' and he assumed a severer mode of expression: 'I *have* read your letter, and take my advice—never for the future make observations upon anyone. There certainly is nothing offensive in it—nothing; but malice can twist a halter from half-a-dozen hairs. There are some d—d good hits: but if you wish to steer clear of personal animosity, never tickle a lion's rump, that's all. You are yet but a greenhorn, and therefore I pass it over without further notice; but if ever you whisper, even in your sleep, another word about my legs, see if I don't use 'em to some purpose! But go along forud—perhaps I may bring you to a court-martial yet, and produce the letter as evidence against you, for impeaching the *understanding* of a Member of Parliament*—it's a clear breach of privilege.'

Poor Ten-thousand was so terrified at the thoughts of having incurred the anger of his commander, as well as having the dread of disgrace before him, that, in his alarm and tremor, he dropped the small portfolio which contained the sketch he had just finished, as well as several minutely-finished water-colour drawings, and nearly the whole were instantly spread upon the cabin-deck. 'Hand those things to me, youngster,' said the captain; and the lad placed them before him. 'Leave them here,' he commanded; 'go to your berth, and carry with you the advice I have given—log it in your memory, young man! Be honest and straightforud in all things; but don't quiz the devil himself—unless, indeed, you're his superior officer—and then don't carry the joke too far.'

Young Blocks bowed and withdrew; and Captain Yorick—no mean proficient himself with the pencil—sat down to examine the sketches. Repeatedly did he look them over—placed them in various lights, to collect all their beauties—replaced them in the case, and audibly whispered, 'That boy will make a bright man some day;—must see a little more of him though, before he comes aft.'

Rumour soon spread the tale along the decks that Ten-thousand was in disgrace; and when he entered the gunner's cabin, honest Will was sitting with a can of stiff grog before him, and showing a most rueful figure-head.

'What's all this about, you young scamp?' said he, spurred into ill-humour by the irritation of the moment; but instantly checking himself on looking at the countenance of the boy, he continued, 'not but what, if you're in the right, I'd die before anyone should injure you whilst it was in my power to lay an anchor to wind'ard of 'em. Every dog has fleas to backbite him, and, mayhap—though you're no dog neither—but there, the best carack-ters in the world have been torn into babby-rags by malice. What did the skipper want with you, my boy? Come, out with it—are you in the right or the wrong?'

'I am sorry to say, sir, that I'm in the wrong,' returned the youth; 'although no harm was meant, yet Captain Yorick says I'm in the wrong.'

'Oh, he does, eh?' grinned Will, as he bit through the huge mountain of tobacco in his mouth. 'The skipper says you're in the wrong, and you plead guilty, eh? Well, I'm bless'd but this is beginning life merrily, anyhow, to make enemies where you ought to secure friends! Harkee, my fine fellow, arn't you got my example afore you, and can't you fear God and obey orders? But what's the damage? What have you been arter? Why the devil don't you speak, and not stand there as if your ideas were all becalmed, and your tongue won't answer the helm? Have you shied a wad at the skipper's legs, put a quid into the gun-room decanters, or stole the midshipmen's lump-sugar? Have you made a tar-bucket of the purser's wig, poisoned the doctor with his own stuff, or stifled the marine-officer with pipeclay?'

All this was uttered with the utmost rapidity and volubility, and Will paused to take a long pull at his grog, after which it was necessary to get breath.

'I have done none of those things, sir,' replied the boy mildly, his thoughts reverting to the parsonage-house, and the gentlemanly manners of his preceptor, so different from what he was then experiencing.

'What the devil *have* you done, then?' inquired the gunner. 'Come, come, out with it.'

'Mr. Blocks, the captain wants you in the cabin directly,' said a quartermaster, opening the door.

'Ay, there it is!' exclaimed the gunner. 'But avast, avast! Arn't I been running ahead of my reckoning? The skipper's not a man to do anything onjust or cruel, and mayhap I may make it all square again. We've sarved together too long for a bit of a squall to part us; so keep up your courage, boy, and don't be down-hearted!' And after finishing his grog, smoothing down his hair, and shaking young Ten-thousand by the hand, he ascended the ladder to the main-deck, and walked aft to the cabin; whilst young Blocks seated himself on his chest, ruminating on what had occurred, and calling to mind the precepts of Mr. Hector, the tenderness of his wife, and the affectionate conduct of Eugenia. Whatever transpired in the cabin was kept secret; but the gunner returned in about ten minutes, called the lad to him, gave him a smile, hoped he didn't bear malice with his old friend for being hasty, and then they went on to the forecastle together to enjoy the coolness of the evening air.

The *Scratchee* was very fortunate in her

* Captain Yorick was an M.P.

cruise, and Ten-thousand found great excitement when chasing the enemy's vessels ; but he was not employed in any regular duty, and therefore was not looked upon as properly belonging to the ship. The result of the affair with the captain was not known ; though from no notice being taken of him for several days, the officers conjectured that he would be either sent on shore, or stationed before the mast. A circumstance, however, occurred that soon set the matter at rest.

Amongst the midshipmen was a delicate little lad, not eleven years of age, but with a spirit far beyond either his strength or magnitude. His watchmate was a stout youth of fifteen, sullen and despotic, fond of showing his seniority, and proud of his titled descent. Young Blocks had on more than one or two occasions observed the manner in which the elder treated the younger, showing an overbearing and not unfrequently cruel disposition. It was about a week after the affair of the letter, and little Parker had displeased his tyrannical messmate, for which the latter had thought fit to punish him by three or four smart blows with what is called a colt—a piece of rope knotted at the end ; and Parker, to avoid a repetition of the severity, descended to the main-deck, just before the main-mast, on the larboard side. Our hero happened to have witnessed the whole transaction ; but he forbore to interfere, as the gunner had given him positive directions never to address the midshipmen unless previously spoken to by them : yet, as he looked on the countenance of the poor little fellow, where sorrow was struggling with pride, he felt how happy it would have made him could he have been permitted to try and comfort him. Persons of tender years are generally correct readers of human sympathy as pictured in the expression of the features, and little Parker saw at a glance that Ten-thousand wished to befriend him. But his tormentor again discovered him, and the colt was laid across his back.

'Away on deck in your watch, you young skulker !' exclaimed the older midshipman. 'What are you doing down here ?'

'Getting out of your brutal way, Acheson,' replied the youngster. 'You'll force me to do something serious in my own defence one of these days, for I won't stand your ill usage much longer.'

'Won't you, though !' rejoined the first contemptuously, and at the same time repeating the blow. 'What, you'll complain, I suppose ? Well, there's something for you to complain about !'

'No, Acheson,' returned little Parker, 'I will *not* complain of you, and I'm not able to fight you ; but I shall some time or other knock you down with a handspike if you go on treating me as you do. Why don't you thrash Mulleon or Ancell ?—because you know you'd get it again.'

'No impertinence, boy !' commanded Acheson ; 'but away on deck, and see what Mr. Watts will say to you about handspikes.'

'Ay, you talk about Mr. Watts, because—' and here the lad paused, as if fearful to proceed.

'Because what ?' vociferated the other, raising his colt. 'Come, don't let us have it by halves, or Sweet-lips shall make his mark again.'

'Why, because you are both alike,' answered Parker : 'and now I don't care if you kill me for it. I wish I was as big as Blocks : you shouldn't crow over me then.'

'Nor Mr. Watts, either, I suppose,' spitefully uttered Acheson. 'But what has Blocks to do with it ?—And,' turning to Ten-thousand, 'pray what business have you to be skulking there, and listening to the conversation of gentlemen ?'

'I am neither skulking, nor listening to the conversation of gentlemen,' returned Blocks coolly and firmly.

'No sauce, fellow !' exclaimed Acheson, strutting up to him with the colt in his hand ; 'and if you don't want a d—— good starting, you'll get out of my way. Walk forud to your proper station.'

'I have yet to learn whether you have a right to order me, sir,' said Blocks, carelessly seating himself on the breach of the gun ; 'and whether or no, I would warn you not to strike me.'

'Indeed,' replied the other, his passion growing more violent from resistance : 'and pray what would you do if I did ?'

'Strike you again,' said Blocks, deliberately, whilst little Parker's face glowed with pleasure at the prospect of finding a champion.

'The devil you would—would you ?' uttered Acheson, placing himself in a menacing attitude. 'You ! you plebeian foundling—you picked-up scum of the ocean—' he paused from passion.

'Your abuse I treat with the contempt that it deserves,' answered Blocks, calmly, 'and your threats are equally unworthy notice ; but a blow would meet with a return, depend upon it.'

'You impertinent scoundrel ! You'd strike an officer, eh ? Mr. Watts shall know of this ;' and Acheson dropped his colt.

'Ah, that's just like your cowardly ways ;' shouted little Parker. 'And perhaps, when you're telling Mr. Watts, you'll let him know at the same time who it was that threw Blocks' letter down the cabin skylight.'

This was something new to Ten-Thousand ; it opened his eyes to the manner in which his letter had come into the captain's possession, though how Acheson had got hold of it remained a mystery. 'Did he open it, Mr. Parker ?' inquired he.

'Yes, he did,' returned the youngster ; 'but he couldn't make out much of it, for he can hardly read writing.'

Blocks said nothing ; he was aware there was a malevolent motive, though he had given no cause for it. 'Yes, I did read it,' said Acheson ; 'and if you were only equal to me in rank, I'd try which would be master. However, *you* shan't be saucy, youngster, so away 'pon deck ;' and a heavy blow of the colt fell upon poor Parker's shoulders.

'You are inflicting punishment on my account,' said Blocks, starting up and facing him so as to get between the two; 'if there's anything wrong in what I have said, let your resentment fall on me.'

'Get out of my way, you vagabond!' exclaimed the other, trying to hit Parker, but prevented by his opponent; 'sheer off, you low-born——'

'Remember, Mr. Acheson, I'll not stand a blow,' exclaimed Ten-Thousand; 'and come what may, I'll defend this young gentleman with my life. You are, I believe, older and stouter than I; you are an officer, and I am nothing: but if you strike him again, I'll try which is the best man.'

Many of the seamen had gathered round, and there were two or three who had witnessed the whole from first to last, and nothing could exceed the pleasure with which they noticed the gallant conduct of young Blocks. To the latter part there was also another spectator; and that was the second-lieutenant, Mr. Watts. 'Come on deck here, directly, Mr. Acheson, and Mr. Parker,' shouted he: 'and, master-at-arms, take that boy and place him aft in confinement.'

The orders of the lieutenant were promptly obeyed; the two midshipmen ascended to the lee-side of the quarter-deck, and Ten-Thousand, under the charge of the master-at-arms, was conducted abaft the wheel to wait the return of the captain, who had gone forward on to the forecastle to inspect the head-sails. Great indeed was the consternation of the gunner when informed that his protegé (who won more and more upon his rugged affections) was a prisoner; but one of his mates who had been present during the altercation set the behaviour of the youth in so favourable a light, that the honest seaman, whilst alarmed at his situation, gloried in his exploit. At length the captain walked aft, and the lieutenant was about to make his report, but was promptly stopped by the generous Yorick, who exclaimed, 'You are going to speak of the youngster, sir?' The lieutenant bowed. 'I beg pardon, but it is quite unnecessary, as I heard the whole myself. You, perhaps, might wish me to be severe with Mr. Acheson;' and he gave Watts one of his hasty glances; 'but I think I can settle the difference in another way. Quartermaster, send my clerk to me.'

'Ay, ay, sir,' responded the person addressed, and who had overheard the conversation, the purport of which he spread as he descended to the midshipman's berth; and the rumour extending along the mess-deck, most of the watch below went up to see in what way the skipper would 'settle the difference.' The captain continued pacing the deck till the clerk touched his hat before him and received some instructions. He then went below, directing the lieutenant to send Mr. Acheson and Blocks into his cabin. The youths complied with very different feelings: the former had not heard the observations of his commander, and entered the sanctum with confident boldness that he could make his own story good; the latter was full of perplexity and doubt, yet secure in the innocency of his intentions.

'You may leave your prisoner, master-at-arms,' said the captain, quietly seating himself, 'and shut the door.' A silence of several minutes ensued, which was broken by the entrance of the clerk with the ship's muster-book in his hand. 'Have you entered him in the proper rating?' inquired Yorick. The clerk replied in the affirmative. 'Then send the whole of the young gentlemen into the cabin.' Another interval of stillness succeeded, disturbed only by the mustering of the midshipmen, who ranged themselves on the larboard-side, anxiously looking at each other as if to inquire what it all meant. As soon as the whole had assembled, 'Cast loose this table,' said the captain; and a dozen busy hands were instantly engaged in overhauling the turns of the seizings through the cleats. The table was soon adrift. 'Stow these chairs in the after-cabin, and launch the table between the guns.' This also was immediately done. 'And now,' continued the chief, erecting himself with dignity, 'young men, attend to what I am going to say. You are starting in life devoted to the service of your country, and it will rest principally upon the impressions you now receive, whether you turn out an honour or a disgrace to the profession. There are some among you of whom I entertain a pleasing expectation that they will become brave and good men, into whose hands on some future day the supremacy of the British flag may with safety be entrusted; and of others, I hope that when experience has matured their reason, they also will do credit to the service. But, young gentlemen, it is not by quarrelling among yourselves—it is not by topping the officer one over the other, that this is to be achieved; and much less by acts of oppression. Mr. Acheson will understand me.' All eyes were instantly directed at the unfortunate mid, who began to fear he had made a bit of a mistake. 'Nor should the youngsters treat the oldsters with disrespect, but look up to them for kindness and protection; remember that, Mr. Parker.'

'I always have, sir,' murmured the little fellow, 'and always would, if Acheson wouldn't use his colt so much.'

'I was witness to a scene just now,' continued the captain, passing the observation of Parker unheeded by, though it drew forth a titter from the middies, 'that pained me very much. But, first of all, my lad,' turning to Ten-thousand, who stood apart by himself wondering how it was to end, 'let me advise you not to interfere in the quarrels of others, and never, whilst the case is doubtful, place yourself in defiance against a superior officer. I honour you for your noble defence of that child, and for the sentiments you expressed; but you did wrong to aggravate. However, we'll pass that by. It was my intention to have placed you on the quarter-deck immediately on your coming aboard; but I was desirous of ascertaining, in the first instance, whether you were likely to be worthy of my patronage. You have answered

my wishes ; and if you keep from letter-writing, or at least from being so careless as to let your communications fall into the hands of a busy postman ;—Mr. Acheson will comprehend the allusion'—again all eyes were fixed on the rueful countenance of the mid—' I say,' continued the captain, ' if you will follow the counsel I have already given you, I hope I shall live to see you a flag-officer. During the little unpleasantness that took place just now upon the main-deck, Mr. Acheson used very unbecoming language—bringing discredit upon *my* ship, and the known gentlemanly feelings of my officers. Mr. Blocks,'—Ten-thousand's ears tingled at the Mister—' and yourself expressed a strong hostility towards each other, such as ought not to exist between future messmates ; and you, Mr. Acheson, said, " if Blocks was only equal to you in rank, you would give him a chance of trying which should be master." Now, though you were extremely wrong in using the abusive language you did, yet I admired your spirit, and the preservation of your rank ;' a slight smile of contempt curled the captain's lip ; ' and as Mr. Blocks is now rated midshipman,'—Ten-thousand shook in every limb—' why, sir, you must either apologise, and handsomely too, for your behaviour, or you must strip and fight him. Here's clear decks and no favour ; each choose your seconds, and I'll be umpire.'

This was a mode of settling the difference but very little expected by the young gentlemen, and at the first they thought the captain was in joke ; but his serious look assured them he was in earnest, and they began to look forward to some fun. A silence of two or three minutes followed the address, and Acheson stood rather doggedly sullen ; but Ten-thousand, finding that no progress was made in any way, advanced steadily to Acheson and held out his hand, which the other at first declined, but after a little hesitation took.

' You have acted generously, young gentleman,' said Yorick ; ' and so we are to have no turn-up, after all ! Lash the table and fetch the chairs back.' This was effected in a few minutes, and the cabin-bell summoned the steward. ' Place the decanters and wine-glasses.' The board was spread. ' Fill one glass, young gentlemen ; drink success to your new messmate, and then away to your duties as shipmates and friends.'

' Come—come along, Blocks !' shouted several of the midshipmen, dragging the youngster with them to the berth. ' You only want a uniform coat and a jacket to fit you out, and we'll lend you them till the cruise is up. Heave ahead, my boy !' And in a short space of time Ten-thousand had mounted the weekly account, and walked forward to his generous but anxious patron, as he was sitting alone in his cabin ; the candle burnt down nearly into the socket, just giving sufficient light to show the cheerless gloom that prevailed. ' Well, my lad, and how is it to be—eggs, or young uns ?' demanded the gunner, heaving out from the deep recesses of his capacious chest what he intended for a sigh. ' Has the skipper signed your Michaelmas—cast you off stock and fluke ? No, no, d—— it ! I wrong him : he always does what's right, and does it well too.—But come, Ten, tell us all about it.'

' Do you see this ?' replied the youth, pointing to his jacket : ' that will tell you all about it.'

' What ! rope's-eended ?' asked Will, starting up, and by his quickness extinguishing the remnant of the light. ' No, no, you can't mean that, Ten.—But there,—I've dowsed the glim. Here, boy—Cupid ! where the devil have you stowed yourself, you horse-marine ?'

' Ay, ay, sir,' answered the boy, flying down the ladder to wait upon his master : ' I'm coming, sir.'

' Like seven bells half struck,' said Will. ' Bear a hand and get a light, you sun of a seacoote. And what is it, Ten, you have got to show me,—eh ?'

' The first-leftenant wants you immediately, Mr. Blocks,' said the same quartermaster who has been mentioned before ; ' and I give you joy.'

' Give me the devil !' muttered the gunner, emerging from his den. ' What can the first-leftenant want with me ?'

' It isn't you that is wanted, sir,' replied the quarter-master from the square of the hatchway.

' Who then ? you said Mr. Blocks,' asserted the worthy tar. ' Why, what are you all bamboozling about ?'

' It's young Mr. Blocks as is wanted, sir,' explained the quartermaster, ' and not you.'

' Oh, what, I'm to be considered as nothing better than *old* Blocks, eh ?' grumbled the gunner, —' treated like condemned stores !—But what does all this mean ?—why don't you speak, Ten ?'

' My dear sir,' replied the youth, deeply affected, ' the captain has rated me midshipman, and——'

' Oh, d—— it ! is that all ?' uttered the gunner with assumed carelessness, for his heart beat at a rattling rate with delight. ' I knew I had interest enough with the skipper to make an officer of you. But there—bear a hand on deck, my boy—I beg pardon, *Mr.* Blocks. But, Jem,' —Ten-thousand started off up the ladder,—' I say, Jem,—here, just swallow a glass of grog to the future prosperity of the lad—Lord love him ! he's somehow or other got double-bitted round my heart, and when I think any mischief's going to fall athwart his hawse, it makes me shiver and shake like a Lascar in a snow-storm.'

The object of the first-lieutenant's interview with our hero was to put him in a watch and appoint him to his station in the various routines of duty. Mr. Spicer was a smart officer, and an amiable man ; and whilst giving his directions to the youth, relative to future conduct, in a voice that showed his very soul was engaged in the profession, there was a gentlemanly and pleasing deportment that did not fail to have a due influence with Ten-thousand. On his return forward, it was agreed between the youth and his patron, that he should rough it out in the midshipman's berth ; and thither he removed to

join his new messmates, and seated himself by Acheson.

'You may perhaps take it into your head to think, that because the captain has placed you on the quarter-deck, you may swagger as you please,' said Acheson to him spitefully: 'but I'll thank you to keep your distance from me, and not attempt to make yourself my equal.'

'Shame, shame, Acheson!' said Ancell, a youth of the same age with the individual he addressed. 'If you don't clap a stopper on your pride, the captain will make you strip yet.'

'And pray, what business is it of yours?' exclaimed Acheson fiercely: 'can't you mind your own affairs, and leave me to mine?'

'Everybody knows that you *never* interfere in other people's concerns,' uttered Mullion sharply and sneeringly. 'For my part, I think your godfather was a barber, and taught you to be always meddling with everything, as well as seeing you made perfect in the vulgar tongue.'

A laugh at Acheson's expense followed this sally, which served to increase his ill-humour; but he answered with hauteur, 'My godfather a paltry barber, indeed! No, sir, my godfather was his Grace the Duke of Portland.'

'Then he's got a graceless godson,' rejoined an old master's-mate, who had hitherto sat silent; 'and though the duke's no barber, he's always amongst the *whigs*.' A roar of applause followed this hit; which having subsided, he went on—'Now, I'll tell you what it is, Acheson,—if you don't belay the slack of your pomposity, and take a couple of reefs in your conceit, if I don't have a court-martial in the berth, and cob you with the horse-shoe end of the boot-jack!'

'Do at your peril!' uttered Acheson, attempting a fierceness of manner, though it was evident he was afraid the threat would be carried into execution.

'Yes, I *will* do it at my own peril, and I will do it at my leisure too; for it would be hardly worth while to disturb the peace of the mess for a subject so worthless,' answered the master's-mate, 'However, whilst I'm caterer, I *will* be minded, in spite of either the barber or the duke.'

'That's right, Mac!' said little Parker, 'I'm sure I always obey you; and why shouldn't Acheson? He wouldn't strip in the cabin, though.

'Hold your tongue, youngster, and don't shove your oar in where 'tis not wanted,' ordered the master's-mate: 'though perhaps it would have been as well to have backed up so much blustering by at least *showing* fight.'

'He would not give me time,' exclaimed Acheson, with a rather subdued voice. 'What! do you think I'm afraid of him?'

'He'll fight you now, Acheson!' shouted Ancell, desirous of seeing him thrashed. 'I'm sure he'll fight you:—won't you, Blocks?'

'I shall always be ready to defend myself,' returned Ten-thousand boldly; 'and when Mr. Acheson thinks fit to attack me, or those who are less able to stand against him, I'll try my best to convince him that he shall not do it with impunity. But I should be very loth, the first evening that I have joined the berth, to be the cause of dissensions and blows. However, I will place myself in the hands of the gentlemen of the mess.'

'Fight him!—fight him!' roared the youngsters, delighted at the prospect of mischief.

'I see you are all against me,' uttered Acheson, rising up, 'and therefore I should have no chance. However,' turning to Parker, '*you* shan't crow; remember, 'tis my middle watch.'

'But not mine,' returned the little fellow, clapping his hands and laughing with delight. 'No, no—the captain is too just a man to leave me to your tender mercies. I'm in Mr. Stowage's watch now; so you may keep your colt—the foal of an ass—to yourself. Ah! anybody may see you're afraid to fight.'

A box of the ear from the master's-mate checked Parker's volubility.

'No impertinence, youngster!—hold your tongue, and shut down the port: I'll have no fighting now. Here, Ebony!—Ebony! where's that dark-looking thunder-cloud got to?—Ebony! Call Ebony there outside.'

'Ebony!'—'Ebony!'—'Ebony!' was passed from mouth to mouth, till it reached the sable ears of a negro who acted as midshipman's steward. And here it may be as well perhaps to remark, for the benefit of the embryo heroes of the cockpit, that black is the best colour for their attendants, as it never shows the dirt; and it is proverbial throughout the service, that the midshipmen's boy is always the most blotted copy of a servant in the ship.—'Ebony!'

'Here em tis, saar,' answered the steward, hastily descending the hatchway. 'Gara-mighty! whar for you makee me start so!—me coming, saar;' and he entered the berth.

'I tell you what it is, Master Guinea,' uttered the master's-mate slowly: 'if ever you haul your wind out of this again so as to get a boat-hook's length away from the reach of my voice, I shall borrow Mr. Acheson's colt. Get supper.'

'Em no tink he want em just now, saar,' returned the black; 'me go on deck for see da trange fleet.'

'A strange fleet!' burst from every voice, and in two minutes the berth was cleared. Ten-thousand accompanied the rest on deck, and by the lights which were seen dancing on the waters, it was evident that a large fleet was in sight; but whether friends or foes was as yet undetermined. Captain Yorick, Mr. Spicer and Mr. Stowage (the master), were attentively scanning them through their glasses.

'They're English, I think, sir,' said Mr. Spicer; 'most probably Lord Howe.'

'I'm very dubersome about that, Mr. Spicer,' replied the master. 'If them were British ships, there wouldn't be such a wasteful expenditure of purser's dips, because Lord Howe wouldn't show never a glim but his own to tell 'em whereabouts he was. But look, sir, at the lights in the centre! why, it's like Piccadilly of illumination night. Take my word for it, they're enemies; and that fellow in the centre is the

three-decker as chased us about six weeks since —the *Goat and Oar*, or some such name.'

'The what, master?' inquired the captain; 'the *Goat and* ——? Come, that's not so bad, anyhow; but it would have been better "*Cot.*" However, I believe you are right. It is the French fleet, sure enough; the ship you speak of is the *Côte d'Or*, and Morard de Galles is at sea. Now, snug's the word! Mr. Spicer, send down and let the watch below bring up their hammocks and stow them. Who's got the watch?'

'I have, sir,' replied the master.

'Then let the watch on deck see all clear for making sail,' said the captain; 'we must give these fellows a wider berth. I wish to Heaven Lord Howe was where I am! not a —— would ever see France again.'

The *Scratchee* was lying pretty close under the land, so that she could not be so well distinguished as if she had been outside the strange fleet, which, with a southerly wind, was stretching away on the larboard tack. The night was tolerably clear overhead; but there was a haze upon the horizon, which, though it did not conceal objects to seaward, yet rendered them dim and obscure in-shore. But there was no mistaking the long line of dancing, flickering lights, which enabled the captain to count twenty-five sail—just the number of line-of-battle ships and frigates that he had reconnoitred a day or two before at anchor under Belleisle. The situation of the English ship was rather critical: she was close to Groa, and had, during daylight, gone under French colours within range of the batteries; she was to leeward, and might be easily cut off, should any sharp eye catch sight of her. Trusting to escape unseen, the sails of the *Scratchee* were clewed up and furled; but the topmen were kept aloft to loose them at a moment's warning. Everything was prepared at quarters, and the gunner was in his glory, when up rose the moon—the breeze freshened, the haze cleared away, and Captain Yorick became aware that further concealment was vain, as two of the fleet were distinguished standing in towards L'Orient. In less than five minutes the frigate was clothed with a cloud of canvas right up to her trucks, and pelting along like a racehorse. One of the ships immediately came in chase, bearing up to cut her off, whilst the other pursued her course. The *Scratchee*, however, had scarcely got clear of Groa, when another ship was seen not more than two miles distant, upon the starboard quarter, running along between that island and the main. When first discovered, she was under easy sail, and it was doubtful whether she was a merchantman or a fighting-craft; but having made out the eight-and-twenty, the matter was placed beyond dispute by her crowding sail, as supposed, in pursuit.

'Let me have the best helmsman in the ship at the wheel,' said the captain, addressing the first-lieutenant. 'We're in the split-stick now; but I'll try and exchange berths with them, if Sir John Warren is anywhere in the neighbourhood. Those fellows 'll be bringing down more of their frigates. Where the devil is Lord Howe?—But that's just the way they manage affairs at home!—tremble at a little expense for an outfit—delay the sailing of an armament through parsimony, and then throw away millions to redeem the error.'

'That's pretty much the case, sir,' said the master, to whom the foregoing observations had been addressed; 'like the ould saying, "penny-wise and pound-foolish."'

'It's d—— hard to be driven away in this fashion, too!' contiuued Yorick; 'I expected a consignment of at least a couple of West Indiamen to my agent, and a few re-captures.' He directed his night-glass to the ship in-shore, and added, 'That fellow overhauls us; and let him be what he will below a forty, I should like to have a slap at him. But then there's the other,' looking out to seaward; 'by the Lord! but he rises fast!—ah, there goes his signal! Get a gun ready forud.' 'All ready!' was the immediate response. 'Fire!' shouted the captain, and the report echoed between the walls of canvas like a dozen discharges. 'One light in the main rigging,' continued the chief, and a signal lantern was almost instantly displayed. 'Another gun from the enemy: repeat it!' cried Yorick; again the loud thunder bellowed amongst the swelling sails. 'A blue-light and a rocket,' said the captain; 'd—— the frog-eating rascal! he fancies himself at Vauxhall. Mr. Blocks, up with a rocket!' and in half a minute a beautiful pale blue flame shed its gleams upon the ocean, and gave a spectral appearance to the men and ship, such as imagination would picture the ghastly vision of some of those death-craft which seamen assert are sometimes flitting above the waters rather than in them. Another half-minute, and away flew a train of fire into the heavens, as if to show the daring ingenuity of man in combining the elements to suit his murderous purposes. 'Oh, he's done, has he!' said Captain Yorick; 'now see what the rascal in-shore says.' All eyes were directed to the ship that was running along the land; but she made no return to the signals, and was walking up abeam of the *Scratchee*, hand over hand. The moon had well risen, and, to the surprise of Captain Yorick, the seaward ship, which approached near enough to show that she was of the line, hauled dead upon a wind, and gave over the chase; whilst the other was clearly made out to be a vessel of war, somewhat about the dimensions of the *Scratchee*.

'Bamboozled the fellow!' shouted Yorick, unable to repress his mirth; 'and now to be somewhat loving with our neighbour there, who, I begin to suspect is much of the same breed as ourselves. Port a little, lad—port! keep her another point to starboard: there—steady, so, How shall we do for the Penmarks, master?'

'All clear, sir, on this course,' answered Mr. Stowage, looking at the compass. 'But if that there's a Frenchman, and has any suspicion of us, he'll haul in for Quimperlay, supposing he don't want to fight.'

'Spoke like an oracle, master,' said the captain; 'and the point which he must round is—'

'—About two leagues distant from him,' answered Stowage, without waiting for the finish of the question.

'How's the current?' inquired the captain, steadily fixing his assisted sight upon the ship, that was now abeam of him, and not more than half-a-mile distant.

'We have got the last drain again us out here, sir,' replied the master; 'but I'm dubersome whether he does not catch the first of the flood where he is.'

'To quarters, Mr. Spicer,' said the captain, 'let the sail-trimmers take their station on the fokstle, ready for the moment's orders:' and the men, by means of the young gentlemen, were in a very few minutes at their guns, prepared and determined to do their best to conquer, should the stranger be an enemy; but the general opinion ran that she was an English cruiser or a Yankee trader: the latter was most prevalent.

'Port, my lad!' said the captain; 'port another half-point, so we shall near each other faster; have the private signal ready—three lights in a triangle—one up the starboard main-rigging, another by the gangway, and the third by the after-swifter, with a blue light. Bear a hand!—we'll try his pluck, at all events,' added he, turning to the first lieutenant. A noise was heard on the main-deck, for discipline had hardly yet got its ascendancy. 'What's that row there below? By Heaven! no wonder we deceive the Frenchman; for if she'd heard you lubbers make such a thundering noise—no wonder, I say, she took us for one of their own craft. Stand clear, my men! I abominate a Frenchman and all his ways. They've more tongue than brains; whilst British tars have their mouths shut and their eyes open. If there's any d— Crapeaus among you there, hand 'em on deck in a clean plate.' The noise abated, though it did not cease, and Yorick sprang down upon the main-deck, where several of the crew were quarrelling, and rather mutinous, on account of some severity that had been practised by one of the boatswain's mates. Yorick strode, or rather straddled amongst them. 'I'll not hang you, ye lubbers! the expenditure of a piece of rope is more than you're worth; but I'll do worse, I'll disgrace you: you shall be pointed at as the cowardly *Scratchees*—you shall be drafted amongst the fleet, and be in every black-list throughout the service. You've a French frigate in-shore, that I made sure you would take into Plymouth with you. But do you think I'd go into action with a set of villains that presume to disobey their officers? No, no! we must run away—we must leave our prize! But every man will be pointed at when you go ashore, as cowards. You'll all be known—ay, I'll put a mark upon you for ever: instead of brandy, you shall have a brand; and if you ask for *why* (y)—Cowards have no spirit——Mr. Spicer!'—the first lieutenant's 'Ay, ay, sir,' was responded—'Mr. Spicer, let the sail-trimmers see all clear for shortening sail, and call the drummer.'

Yorick ceased, and not a whisper was heard—all was as still as death. 'Are you English or French?' shouted he; 'let me know! But there, let the French rogues come in a-midships, and my own tars stand to their guns.' In an instant every seaman was at his station, and the captain returned to the quarter-deck. 'Show the private signal,' said the captain, and it was immediately displayed as ordered, but no notice was taken of it. 'What have I got there upon the main-deck, English or French?' shouted Yorick: and a simultaneous cry arose, 'English, by Heaven!' He did not suffer a moment's pause before his voice was again heard: 'Then stand by your bull-dogs.'

The strange ship kept her course, and in about another quarter-of-an-hour the two were within hailing-distance. 'Hooo—whooo!' shouted Yorick through his speaking-trumpet, but no answer was returned. Again the loud sonorous voice of the captain flew across the waters, but still no reply was made. 'Mr. Blocks,' said the captain in an undertone to Ten-thousand, 'run forud and tell your namesake to throw a shot from the bow-gun right under that fellow's fore-foot.'

'Ay, ay, sir,' responded the youngster, and promptly hastened along the gangway to the forecastle, where he delivered his orders.

'We'll see, my boy—we'll see,' said Will, taking a handspike and heaving the breach of the gun round to the required position. 'Now then!' He applied the match—the smoke wreathed up, and the report rebounded from the stranger.

'Very well hove,' said the captain; 'knocked away his flying jib-boom. Hooo!' he shouted again, and was answered in French—'*Le Commerce de L'Orient*—what frigate's that?'

'His Britannic Majesty's ship'—The captain was not allowed to finish the words, before the shots from a broadside came crashing and rending through the sides and spars of the *Scratchee*, and the battle commenced. 'Pass the word to the officers of divisions to order the men at their quarters to unrig the fellow. He goes two foot to our one, and he'll outwalk us if we don't shorten sail for him. Fire high, men! Mr. Blocks, see if you can't take in his main-topsel for him.'

'Ay, ay, sir,' answered the gunner, highly pleased at the confidence which his chief seemed to place in his professional talents, and busying himself with the forecastle gun; 'I'll try my luck, anyhow. Elevate her muzzle, Jem—so, so; that's too high—depress an inch or two—steady.' He cast his eye along the sight, watched the motion, and, when suitably laid, waited for a clearance in the smoke. The opportunity was offered, and the next minute the main-topgallant-mast of the enemy was knocked away close to the cap. Ten minutes decided the business: the stranger's canvas was rent to shreds—there was no chance of escape—she ceased firing, and hailed that she had struck. Nor was there much surprise caused at her doing so, when, on boarding, she was found to be a privateer, mounting twenty-six guns, with a crew of two-hundred and forty men, quite new, admirably fitted out and well

found: she belonged to Bordeaux, and had left Basque Roads early in the morning, with the intention of trying her luck in the British Channel. The fire of the English frigate had done great execution; fourteen lay dead, and there were upwards of sixty wounded who were found lying about the decks unheeded by their shipmates, and many of them bleeding to death.

CHAPTER IV.

'The bullets are flying, huzza! huzza!
The bullets are flying away, away;
The brawny boarders mount by the chains,
And are over their buckles in blood and brains!
On the foeman's deck, where a man should be,
Young Hamilton Tighe
Waves his cutlass high,
And *Capitaine Crapaud* bends low at his knee.'
Legend of Hamilton Tighe.

No sooner was the prize taken possession of, than all sail was immediately made to escape from the vicinity of the French fleet, who Captain Yorick naturally concluded would hear the reports of the guns, and the admiral would probably send a far superior force to his own, for the purpose of ascertaining the cause. The privateer was kept close to the *Scratchee* during the night, the crew of the frigate remaining at their quarters. The breeze freshened; the water remained smooth: the men had but little to do, so they sat and conversed together on the nature of their conquest, and calculated the amount of prize-money each would share. They laughed heartily at the promptitude of the 'skipper' in setting matters to rights, and restoring good order on the main-deck when an ebullition of strong feeling had overpowered discretion. The Scratchees were a rough, undisciplined set, though braver fellows never toed a line at muster; but they became sensible that they had a master-spirit to deal with, and felt no repugnance at the conviction.

A little before daybreak, both ships having gained a good offing, were hove to, and the boats were busily engaged in removing the prisoners. Young Blocks found his knowledge of the French language peculiarly serviceable, not only to himself, but also to those officers who were ignorant of it, as well as the unfortunate captives. The privateer's crew were none of the most reputable individuals in life; indeed, she had been manned chiefly from the gaols and galleys, as the men-of-war had picked up most of the seamen that could be found to fit out and complete the complements of the French fleet. Amongst such a set there was some difficulty in compelling obedience, and a gang of about fifty in a state of intoxication got forward on the main-deck of the privateer, as if determined to resist removal; and the second-lieutenant sent Acheson down with a party of marines to fire at them if they would not obey. Ten-thousand, with five or six seamen, was remonstrating with them on their folly, and pointing out that it was likely to prove fatal to some, and might lead to the mutilation of others. One of their own officers warmly supported him, and the fellows were becoming more reasonable, when Acheson made his appearance with the marines coming forward along the main-deck. Without delaying an instant, though he must have been aware that Blocks and the frigates' men were between him and the enemy, he ordered the marines to fire; and these well-trained disciplinarians would in sheer obedience to the word of command have poured in a destructive volley, had it not been for the sergeant opportunely joining them at the very moment they were coming to the present, and shouting with stentorian lungs, 'Recover arms!' One musket was, however, fired, and an unfortunate Frenchman who was standing close by Blocks gave a convulsive struggle and breathed his last. The privateer's men were enraged, but they saw how useless would be resistance, especially as Acheson had again directed the marines to fire; but the sergeant insisted upon ordering his own men, and the Frenchmen went sullenly on deck.

'Whatever was your intention, Acheson,' said Ten-thousand, as soon as duty would permit, 'whatever was your intention in making an instantaneous attack upon those fellows, you ought to have remembered that some of our own men would have been exposed to the marines' fire.'

'I am not to be schooled by you, sir,' returned Acheson, fiercely, 'a mere know-nothing, that never was at sea before. I am your senior officer here, and I order you on deck.'

'An order I shall not obey, as I am under the command of Mr. Watts, and not you,' returned our hero. 'Nor would I leave these prisoners to your ferocious nature.'

'Send the marines on deck directly,' shouted the second-lieutenant: 'and, Mr. Acheson, remain down there, and see the prisoners up as quick as possible.'

'Ay, ay, sir,' answered Acheson, but without moving a step from his position. The sergeant marched off his party up the hatchway, and Blocks, calling his handful of men together, prepared to descend to the orlop, for the purpose of ascertaining whether there was anyone concealed. 'Remain with me, men,' exclaimed Acheson; 'I shall want you here.'

'Mr. Watts placed them under me for this especial duty,' returned Blocks, firmly, 'and not one shall quit me without my sanction.'

'But I'm not going to be left alone here with such a set of cut-throat rascals,' said Acheson, somewhat imploringly. 'I shall go and report to Mr. Watts.'

'Take care what you say, Acheson,' uttered Ten-thousand: 'remember, falsehood and malice often defeat themselves. As far as I am concerned, I defy you; but think well before you speak; it may be good for your own safety.'

'Three times to-day have you run athwart me,' exclaimed Acheson: 'd—— you! come what will, I'll have revenge!' He darted towards the hatchway, down which Blocks was descending, and aimed a furious blow at him with a cutlass; but the latter, making a jump to the bottom of the ladder, avoided the stroke; whilst the cowardly rascal, meeting with no resistance,

overbalanced himself, and went sprawling head foremost down the hatchway, where he lay bruised and stunned. At first, so indignant was Ten-thousand, that he determined to let him lie; but better feelings prevailed, and, therefore, raising him up, he ordered two of the men to convey him upon deck, whilst he with the remainder prosecuted his search. As soon as it was finished, he made his report to Mr. Watts, and found that Acheson had been sent in a state of insensibility on board the frigate. For himself, he had formed a resolution not to make any mention of the transaction; but he did not deem it an act of justice to lay any restraint upon the men who had witnessed what had taken place.

Mr. Watts was appointed to command the prize and take her into Plymouth, whilst the frigate made sail to look out and give information that the French fleet was at sea.

'And what do you think of fighting, Ten?' inquired the gunner of his protegé when next they met. 'It's rough-and-tumble work to them as arn't used to it! I hears you behaved very well, and it warms my heart, Ten, for, somehow, I can't help thinking of you, let you be where you will.'

'Your kindness is always acceptable to me, sir,' returned the youth, modestly; 'and I have nothing in life to wish for, if Acheson wouldn't bear me such deadly animosity.'

'Have a care of him, lad,' whispered the gunner, shaking his head: 'he's like a pet monkey, full of spite, and would do you an injury if he could. Such officers ruin the sarvice, and I'm thinking some day or other he'll be napping monkey's allowance, more kicks than ha'pence, Ten. Howsomever, he's hove down in the sick-list now, and mayhap will have to be left ashore next cruise; so keep your weather-eye up, Ten, and we'll get to wind'ard of him yet.'

Acheson was severely hurt, but he was too wise to say anything about the cause, although it was pretty well known by his messmates and amongst the ship's company; and whilst it lowered him in their estimation, it served to raise Ten-thousand higher than ever. None pitied the former: indeed, there were many who rejoiced, and no one more heartily than little Parker, who now looked up to our hero as his best friend and protector. But the highest gratification young Blocks experienced was derived from the approbation of his commander, who honoured him with especial favour—particularly at those periods when the tensity of duty becomes relaxed, and the generous wine expands the heart of true benevolence. Ten-thousand took his regular turn at the captain's dinner-table, and on more than one occasion they had been employed sketching together in the morning.

The number of prisoners on board the frigate exceeded that of the ship's company, and being most of them desperate characters, it was necessary to be constantly on the alert, for as half-a-dozen might perpetrate the worst mischief, so it was utterly impossible to detect the offenders amongst so many. This may be exemplified by stating that when the *Scratchee* returned to Plymouth, and a range of the cable was hauled up previous to letting go the anchor, it was found cut nearly strand-through in several places; and once or twice the breechings of the guns had been similarly dealt with. Captain Yorick, however, trusted to his own vigilance, and he never quitted the deck without leaving it in charge of one of the officers—generally the first-lieutenant, on whom he could place the strictest reliance—for he was well aware that not only did the prisoners require a sharp eye, but also several of his own people were not to be depended on. Still, as the French West India convoy was hourly expected, he felt a repugnance at quitting their track, and thereby losing a chance of encouraging his officers and men, as well as improving his own fortune.

There were one or two among the prisoners who seldom made their appearance, and rumour spread conjectures that they had cogent reasons for concealment; nor was this supposition lessened when one of them, an officer, was discovered to be in intimacy with Mr. Acheson. How they had become acquainted was a mystery to all, and the young man's unamiable propensities forbade the attributing of the acquaintance to feelings of compassion or generosity. Certain it was, that the Frenchman (who, however, was strongly suspected to be an Englishman) paid the midshipman very great attention during his confinement, and was most obsequious to his wishes. As soon as Acheson was able to move about, Captain Yorick questioned him on the subject; but the young man 'denied all previous knowledge of the prisoner,' and 'protested, the only motive which actuated him was humanity;' that, 'being neglected by his messmates' (which was untrue), 'Dubois had nursed him with kindness and attention.'

'I will not urge you further, Mr. Acheson,' said Captain Yorick, 'and I have no right to wring a secret from you when the life of a fellow-creature is at stake. Still, sir, there are circumstances which have come to my knowledge;'—Acheson trembled in every limb. 'Sit down, sir, your illness has made you nervous and weak,'—and Yorick condescendingly handed him a chair. 'I was observing, that circumstances had come to my knowledge which renders the position of that man extremely doubtful: his shipmates speak of him in terms of disrespect—as a hardened, abandoned miscreant; and Captain Belliaud has more than hinted that the marks of the fetters are yet upon his wrists and ankles. Such a character is not very likely to be influenced by the impulses of humanity, and therefore I am induced to look to some other cause for his attention to you. Mind, sir, your secret is with yourself, but if you have respect for the service and veneration for your king, you will never suffer a traitor to escape. I do not say positively that Dubois is a traitor—I have no means of proving it; but I tell you in fairness, that if I do find him out, sir, he shall hang, and your situation will be rather precarious, young gentleman!'—Acheson was about to speak, but was instantly checked by his chief, who went on: 'Avast, sir, avast! I have appealed to your

honour, I have touched your pride, but I have also used threats. Go, young gentleman, and digest the whole. Think calmly and deliberately. What has passed here shall rest between ourselves, it shall not be said that I wrested a secret from you. Go to your berth, sir, and commune with your own heart.'

Acheson immediately obeyed; and Dubois was ready to receive him, not in the midshipman's berth, for that would not be allowed, but at the place where the invalid's hammock was suspended. The young man looked cautiously around to discover whether there were any listeners, but finding there was no one within hearing, he whispered: 'You are suspected, Clairfait, and if discovered, you know your doom.'

'Will you venture to betray me?' asked the other in the same tone of voice, and in perfect English.

'What can I do?' returned Acheson, mournfully. 'If you are found out, it will be my ruin; and the tale you have told me may not have a word of truth in it.'

'As you please,' said the other, doggedly; 'but remember, as sure as he I told you of is now in the same ship with you, so sure shall be your downfall with mine. I have documents in Plymouth sufficient to convince an unbelieving Jew: besides, I fear no one's recognition if you are silent.'

'It's a very awkward affair,' uttered Acheson, a secret determination working in his mind to betray his companion, if he could do so without injury to himself. 'What you have told me is most mysterious and improbable.'

'But it is nevertheless the truth; ay, as clearly the truth as that the sun gives light and the heavens are studded with stars,' said the prisoner.

'There are certainly several circumstances of a nature that tend to give a foundation to your statements,' observed Acheson.

'Betray me, and you will find the whole a reality—a fearful reality,' answered the man. 'And recollect, young gentleman, I have a palliative to plead: for though I was born in England, and my mother a native of that country, yet my father was a Frenchman; and who can blame me for preferring the land of my father's nativity to my own? Use your pleasure, sir: the name I go by is properly my own, that of Clairfait but assumed.—Your name! you scarcely know it yourself.'

'Are you well assured that there is no fear of detection?' asked Acheson more composedly.

'There is not a being on earth, at least nigh hand, whom I care for, so that you will but keep my council,' replied Dubois. 'Do not let a craven fear annihilate your future hopes and prospects. Do not drag down disgrace and poverty on those whom you are bound to love.' Acheson shuddered. 'Do not place your enemy on the pinnacle of fortune, and at the same moment sink yourself to perdition.'

'Never, never, so help me ——!' answered the midshipman, forgetful that he was calling upon the God of justice and retribution to attest his adherence to crime. 'Leave me, Dubois, leave me now,' added he, much agitated; 'let me turn in a little while and think.'

'Eh bien, monsieur,' exclaimed the prisoner aloud, and assisting Acheson into his hammock, 'bon repos!' and he quitted the spot.

That the pretended Frenchman had obtained an amazing influence over the young man's mind there could not be a doubt, and that it was by means known only to themselves was equally certain; for as he lay in his hammock heavy groans burst from his heart, in spite of his endeavours to suppress them: but there was no one near to listen, or to soothe him; every soul, except a few of the prisoners, and the sentries who watched over them, was on deck, making sail in chase of a large lugger that was seen in the north-east with a ship close to her. They were both hove to, and it was supposed to be a French privateer boarding an English merchantman. The two vessels, however, very speedily separated and stood on different courses; and though a good re-capture would have paid the best, yet Captain Yorick lost not an instant in deciding to pursue the lugger, especially as he carried a fine breeze, whilst the others lay nearly becalmed. The lugger had got out her sweeps, and was making very fair headway; but the frigate came rapidly up with her till nearly within gun-shot, when she also lost the wind, and her sails hung flapping against the masts. Still she held her own with the lugger, till the light breeze died entirely away, and not a breath curled the surface of the blue wave.

'Send the prisoners below,' exclaimed the captain, as he rapidly paced the deck, and occasionally paused to cast a hasty glance at the strangers. The order was promptly obeyed; the prisoners were sent below, and a sergeant with a party of marines placed over them to keep the whole in order. The officers, however, were suffered to remain. As soon as the first-lieutenant had reported the main-deck clear, he was directed to get the boats out, and prepare to take command of them. In a quarter of an hour all the boats were in the water manned and armed, the launch with an eighteen-pounder carronade in her bows, and the pinnace with a twelve-pounder carronade.

The lugger was not two miles distant, and the ship between three and four.

'Had we not better divide the party, sir?' said the first-lieutenant. 'The cutter and jolly-boat might recapture the ship, whilst we carried the lugger.'

'Remember the old man and the bundle of sticks, Mr. Spicer,' responded Yorick. 'Do you capture the lugger; I'll take care of the ship afterwards.' He then added in an undertone 'I have given young Blocks the small cutter; have an eye upon the youngster, and let me know how he behaves. The gunner has got the pinnace.' He looked over the gangway unexpectedly, and hallooed out, 'Halloo! whose head's that bobbing up in the stern-sheets of the small cutter?' and up rose little Parker with a pistol in his hand, and a heavy cutlass buckled round him. 'Pray, Mr. Tom-tit,' shouted the captain, 'who gave you permission to leave the ship? Come, sir, come on board again. Do you think

I could spare so important a personage at such a time as this?' and Yorick laughed as the child reluctantly ascended the side, fearful of having offended his commander. 'No, no, Mr. Parker,' added the captain, highly pleased at the boy's gallantry, but assuming a severe look to deter him from such freaks in future, 'I cannot afford to expend you yet awhile; and let it be clearly understood between us, that you remain on board till both bowers are fast in the ground, and the ship is held by the nose between them. Go aft, sir,—I must have a few more words with you presently.' And the brave little fellow, dragging a cutlass as long as himself, to the great amusement of all who saw him, walked aft to an old friend—Mr. Stowage.

'Mercy on us! what hog in armour have we here?' exclaimed the master, laughing heartily. 'I'm sure the captain ought to have let you gone, for the lugger wouldn't attempt a defence with such a Goliath as you in the boat.'

'I am not to be despised because I am little, sir,' answered the mortified boy. 'I might have done some good.'

'And been sent home to your heart-broken mother stowed away in a cartridge-box, with your head knocked off,' returned the master, gratified by the boy's demeanour. 'I am afraid Blocks will get reprimanded, though, for suffering you to get in the boat.'

'It was not his fault, sir,—indeed it was not,' urged Parker, alarmed lest his friend should get into trouble. 'He did not know I was in the cutter, for I stowed myself away in the bows at first, and when I went aft he wanted to send me aboard again. Indeed, Mr. Stowage, Blocks was not to blame.'

At this moment a loud shout arose from the flotilla as they shoved off and formed, and three hearty cheers resounded, which were answered by those remaining in the frigate. 'Beat to quarters, Mr. Stowage,' said the captain as soon as silence was restored; and at the roll of the drum the men handled their arms and took their stations.

'Your armament will hardly succeed,' said Captain Belliaud, late of the privateer, to Yorick, as they stood looking at the lugger. 'I think I know that vessel; she carries twelve six-pounders and two brass nines, with a crew, including officers, but little short of a hundred. They will have an immense advantage over the boats with the nine-pounders, if they point them well.'

'I have no fear for my lads,' returned Yorick, 'and the nine-pounders won't have long to play with them.' He wetted the tips of his fingers with his tongue, and held them up. 'Ah, by George! but there's an air of wind aloft, though there's not a breath upon the face of the ocean. See! the royals and skysels are filled;' and tearing a piece of paper which he pulled from his pocket, he threw a fragment over the quarter: it fluttered for an instant, then fell dead upon the water, and remaining stationery, the vessel evidenced the progress she made by passing it at rather more than a knot an hour.

Neither officers nor seamen had anything to do, and the utmost excitement prevailed as the little armament pulled steadily towards the object of attack, which was plying her sweeps with rapidity, and travelling at no less than three knots, whilst the boats were making about double that number of miles.

'There go the nine-pounders!' said Belliaud, as a wreath of smoke curled up from the lugger's stern; and Yorick quickly glanced his eye at the boats. The shot fell short, and the experiment was not immediately repeated. In about five minutes, however, a second cloud obscured the lugger, and this time the shot struck the water close to the small cutter, throwing the spray over the boat; but the men pulled steadily on, without giving the slightest heed that they were now within range. Another shot fell about half-a-dozen fathoms ahead of the launch, then rose again, passed closely over their heads, dropping astern, and spent itself in playing at 'ducks and drakes.'

'Those fellows have had good practice,' said Yorick, as a certain undefinable sensation crept upon his heart lest any of the boats should get hit. 'But never mind; Spicer will give them a taste of the carronade presently: and your privateer's-men, though they come from the Garonne, are not over fond of grape.'

Again the smoke curled up from the lugger, and, as if the commander had heard the remark of Yorick, a shower of grape from the nine pounders fell ahead, but in a line with the flotilla, and throwing up the water like a shoal of flying-fish off Barbadoes. Still the boats, uninjured, continued to pull steadily on, each preserving its position in a line close ahead and astern, the launch leading them; but no return was made to the fire of the privateer. A few minutes more, and again the grape was seen dashing up the spray close to the launch; and the captain observed through his glass, with pain, that two oars lay idle in the rowlocks: the poor fellows had fallen, but their places were instantly supplied by a couple of marines, and the launch held on her way as if nothing had happened.

'Brave fellows!' uttered Captain Belliaud. 'With such gallant souls, I fear I shall have to meet my countrymen yet.'

'Lord love you!' said the master, 'they thinks no more of a shot than I do of an ingon. Here, young gentleman,' turning to Parker, 'take a look through my glass at your shipmates, and watch the next discharge.'

The little fellow did as he was bid; nor had he long to wait, for the grape flew over he boats, dancing and skimming along till spent, and then they were added to the accumulated heaps in that vast shot-locker—the ocean; or, as the boatswain observed, Davy Jones would have a few more beads for his young devils. 'Pray, what do you think of that, Mr. Parker?' asked old Stowage.

'Oh, that's nothing, sir!' answered the youngster, smiling. 'Our school once stood another school with stones,—and they're as hard

as shot,—and we beat 'em just as Mr. Spicer will do the lugger presently. See, Mr. Stowage, there's goes the gun in the launch.

'Hand me my glass, boy,' said the veteran impatiently, as he jumped upon one of the quarter-deck carronades; and Parker instantly obeyed.

'Short! short!' exclaimed Yorick. 'Spicer's not yet within range; a few minutes more, and he'll pay'em back a few of their compliments. I see old Blocks is becoming busy too: he wants to give them a taste of that iron-pot of his, but he's too good a judge to begin too soon. There goes the lugger again!'

In an instant everything on board the frigate was hushed, for the spectacle became of the most animating and exciting nature to those who had no share in the encounter. The shots again fell harmless, and the hum of many voices united in one general cheer came swelling upon the surface of the glassy sea.

'Mr. Stowage, keep your eye upon the lugger, said the captain. 'Spicer is going to attempt it again, and I think he'll pitch the iron aboard this time. Ay, there he tries his range. Hurrah! well done, my fine fellow! By Heaven, but he's knocked away the chips, and down comes the lugger's mizen.'

Again the distant hum of voices reached the frigate. Yorick in his ecstasy waved his hat; and first one, and then another hurrah was heard, till it swelled into a general chorus fore and aft, and the *Scratchee's* decks echoed to the thrilling sound of British cheers.

'Sacré!' exclaimed Belliaud with deep mortification. 'Monsieur, your countrymen must win.'

'To be sure they will,' answered Yorick, entering most amply into the spirit-stirring scene; 'most undoubtedly they will! I never thought otherwise. Mind the boats, Mr. Stowage; the privateer is pulling round to get his broadside to bear;' and scarcely were the words uttered, before the vessel was enveloped in smoke, and the captain's voice was again heard—'What do you see, Mr. Stowage?'

'The small cutter has been struck, sir, and the bow-oars are laid in,' answered the master; 'but I do not think anyone is hurt.'

'I see, I see,' said Yorick, speaking in an undertone to himself; 'and now the pinnace is closing with them—the oars are tossed—they are alongside;—there's one poor fellow lifted in, wounded—wounded. The boat is abandoned—hurrah! pinnace gives way again.—What the devil are you about, Spicer?—speak, man! and grape for your life.—Ah, he hears me! Well done, my boy! that's let daylight into his 'tween decks—and presently Blocks will whisper a word or two.'

A round shot from the launch's eighteen-pounder had crashed into the lugger's quarter about two feet above the water-line; and as she heaved in the swell, the liquid element rushed in so as to render it necessary for a couple of men to be slung over to patch up the hole. But the supposed nine-pounders used as stern-chasers were not idle, and the contest grew every moment more and more animated, so as to produce the most lively emotions amongst the spectators; round and grape skimmed along the surface, sometimes striking the summit of the swell, and glancing off again like a bird wetting its wings. The admirable and closely-formed line preserved by the boats (all except the sinking small cutter that lay alone and deserted) rendered it difficult to hit them, especially as the quick motion of the lugger prevented a steady aim.

'The pinnace is drawing out, sir,' said Stowage, addressing the captain. 'Blocks is forud in her bows—she's clear of the line—and there goes the twelve-pounder: look out for the splinters, for never did gunner throw a better shot.'

'Well done, Blocks!' shouted the captain; 'bravely planted! grape slap through the bulwarks just above the deck;—admirably timed! just as she was winding to bring her broadside to bear. What are they about in the launch?—Play up, Spicer!—you son of a gun!—you seem to have forgot your mother-tongue. Watch the effect of the lugger's fire;—no harm done that I can see. There bellows the eighteen; but the enemy is in the thick of the smoke, and what mischief she gets must be shared out amongst them.'

Sometimes the boats, and at other times the privateer, were totally enveloped in the thick smoke, which, as there was no wind, settled down heavily on the water; but they soon emerged from the density, as the propelling power was kept in operation, though now the distance had increased so much from the frigate that they could only be seen through the vapour they left in their track. The boats neared the enemy fast, and musketry was called into play.—But we will for a short time quit the frigate and join the flotilla. Mr. Spicer, in the launch with twenty men, had the chief command; Mr. Blocks, with eighteen men, was in the pinnace; Mr. Macdonald, the master's mate, already mentioned as the caterer of the young gentlemen's mess, had the large cutter with twelve men; and our hero was in the small cutter with ten men,—thus making a total of four officers and sixty stout seamen and marines, well armed and eager for the affray. Onward they pulled, keeping close together; and the first shot from the privateer reminded them that they were approaching the debatable ground, and would soon go to work in earnest. The grape that entered the launch killed one man outright, and disabled another; but, as we have before stated, their places were instantly supplied by a couple of marines, and the dead and the wounded lay side by side in the bottom of the boat.

'Give way, my boys in the cutters!' shouted Mr. Spicer, as he went forward to superintend the carronade. 'Hurrah!' was the response, and the men bent gallantly to their oars. The gunner had frequently looked astern to see how his protegé got on; but he could make out very little, except that the small cutter, being an old and heavy-pulling boat, was at times left considerably in the rear, and delayed the rest, who were compelled to wait for her. Such was the case when a round shot entered her bows at the

water-line, and tore out the breadth of two planks, took the bowman's leg just below the knee, and passed out over the quarter. The gunner became immediately aware of what had happened, hailed the launch, and then pulled short round to rescue the poor fellows from the sinking wreck. Ten-thousand was about to spring into the pinnace as soon as she got alongside; but the gunner waved him back, and uttered, with a frown, 'Avast, young gentleman! —there's a wounded man.' The youngster felt the reproof and remained till every one had quitted the cutter, when he also left her to her fate, and the pinnace not only resumed a proper station in the line, but pulled up close to the launch's quarter, for half the recued men to board.

'Well, Ten,' said the gunner, addressing his protegé, whilst at the same time he was folding up his silk neckerchief to apply it by way of tourniquet to the shattered leg of the unfortunate fellow, who had been removed from the small cutter, and now was extended at full length in the stern-sheets of the pinnace. 'Well, Ten, how do you like the whistling of shot—eh?' A shower of grape at that moment hurtled in the air above them, with that peculiar half hiss, half whistle, which may be heard but not described. 'Pretty music, arn't it, and somut different to psalm-singing! But here, lend us a hand, Ten, to clap this *turn-again* upon the fag eend of poor Jack's lower stanchion.' The youth, with sickly sensation at the sight of the mangled and bleeding limb, complied. 'Now, don't be awkward, youngster, but larn how it's done: there, gently, so, Ten—gently so, and mind and don't let him go by the run. Cheer up, heart! Jack, you'll get a cook's warrant and sarve out burgoo yet. Lord love you! about twenty inches or two foot of timber 'll set you all square again by-and-by. Don't look at me, coxsun, but pay heed to your steering; and hand the young gentleman the spare tiller out of the box. There, lay hould of it, jolly, and bear a hand—it may be your turn next.' The marine received the spare tiller from the coxswain and passed it to Ten-thousand; whilst the gunner took two turns with the rolled-up neckerchief round the stump, and loosely knotted the ends;—he then placed the spare tiller through the slack bight, and using it by way of heaver, he screwed every part of the bandage tight. During this process, which was executed with the most perfect coolness, as if it was a mere ordinary act of daily occurrence, the gunner continued a running colloquy. 'Lay hould of the other side, Ten, and heave handsomely and steadily, so as to give time for the turns to render.' The poor fellow groaned, and the youth trembled, which brought a stern look from his patron. 'Handsomely, Ten—handsomely, and don't shake the heaver, for it hurts him, poor fellow! Have you got a bit of sanctum smearum in the boat, any of you? for them turns won't render kindly.' Some tallow was handed to him from the box, which he applied to the deputy tourniquet as if he had been clapping a seizing upon the fag end of a shroud. 'Now heave again, Ten; and lay quiet, Jack, there's a good sowl! I'll stop the *confusion* of blood directly. Now, suppose you had left him in the cutter, Ten! Never be the first to quit your craft when she's in danger—no disparagement to you now, my lad, for I dare say you didn't think of it, for it was somut in the latitude of what the larned calls a *slapsis lingo*.' Another groan from the wounded seaman; and as the arteries and veins became narrowed by compression, the blood spirted out in little gushes as fine as a thread. 'Ah, I know you must feel it, Jack, but still we must fish it just to sarve yourself; and I'm blessed if I don't come and see you at Grinage, when you gets your iron-bound long togs and a three-cornered scraper.' Another flight of both round and grape swept past them; but the men took but little notice, bending to their oars with the same undaunted carelessness as if they had been pulling into Sallyport from Spithead. A report from the launch's eighteen-pounder, however, operated very differently; the moment it was heard, loud cheers ascended, and the boats' crews seemed more eager to get into the thick of the action.

'The shot has fell short about half a cable's length,' said the coxswain to the gunner, who never raised his head from his occupation.

'Then there's a cartridge expended and eighteen pound of iron thrown away to no purpose,' grumbled Blocks. 'Give way, my lads! stick her nose right in the launch's starn, and let her smell the powder.' He then went on in a lower tone—'No, no, Ten, never leave the craft you command whilst there's a man aboard and the planks will hould together. Log it down in your memory, my boy, that an officer must never have no thought for his own safety till he sees his men out of danger.'

Ten-thousand was abashed; he felt the blood rush to his cheeks and tinge them with a deep suffusion. 'I *will* remember it, sir,' said he, 'and I take great shame to myself for having been so heedless and deficient in my duty just now.'

'All very proper,' continued the gunner, applying a piece of tarred parcelling to the mangled flesh of the sufferer, and binding it up with a handkerchief; 'but don't heed it just now, and keep close to me in boarding, that you may live and larn. Grasp your cutlash with a taut grip, and keep a free arm: but don't be rash or hasty, cutting away from starboard to port, and from port to starboard, without having any particular object in view; but keep yourself cool, with a steady eye and a good guard, till you catch an opportunity to make your blow tell. You must be able to hit pretty smart by this time, Ten: and mind, the head and face are the best points of assault for a cutlash—though a heavy stroke just about the wrist or elbow of the sword arm, if well laid on, generally disables a fellow, unless he's left-handed; but, at all events, it gives you an advantage.' Another shot from the launch stopped his utterance for a moment.

'Slap into the lugger's counter, Mr. Blocks!'

cried the coxswain. 'I'm bless'd! but that's digging for daylight, anyhow!'

'Mind your helm, Johnson,' said the gunner; but three hearty cheers resounded, and were responded to by the frigate. As soon as silence was restored, the gunner went on, as he carefully laid the shattered limb on some jackets that were spread beneath, and then propped the poor fellow's head with others: 'There, Jack, I can do no more for you; keep quiet, my lad.'

'Water—a little water, Mr. Blocks,' feebly uttered the almost exhausted seaman; 'tor the love of God, a little water.'

'Is there any water in the boat?' inquired the kind-hearted gunner, and was answered in the negative. 'There is none, Jack,' continued he: 'but a few minutes more, and we shall get plenty in the privateer—mayhap with a dash of what the French call "O Davy!" in it. Now look at that *turn again*, Ten—every part does its proper duty—but what's the use, Ten, of mangling a poor devil, when it's best, if you can, to be merciful and put him out of his misery at once, especially when your enemy's no better than a privateer's-man? 'Cause why, my boy? Now, there's poor Jack, there, as smart a topman as ever crossed a t'gal'nt yard, and see how he's hove down on his beam-ends; but, seeing as he's in the sarvice of his king and country, instead of being cast adrift to shift for himself, he'll have a pension and a snug berth for life: but your privateer's-man belongs to nobody, and if he loses a limb or gets his dead-lights closed in, there he is, kicked about like a ten-weeks' chaw, without pension, most likely without friends. So, d'ye mind, Ten, when you uses your pistols, don't get flusterated and flabbergasted, but take a steady aim at the head or the heart, and do the job at once.' Again the shot flew about them in every direction, striking and splintering the blades of the oars, but without doing any further injury. 'There comes the grape again!' continued the gunner: 'them lubbers have got some pretty pieces in that craft, but, Lord love you! they don't know how to use 'em. Now, if a hindividual I could name was ounly at the breach of them there guns—and they're brass by the ring of 'em—there's no snakes in Virginny, but somebody wouldn't have nothing to boast of. Give way, men! Mr. Spicer is giving 'em the marbles; let me see what our ould pitch-kettle is made of.'

Blocks rose from his seat—coolly scanned the aspect of affairs—then leisurely stepping from thwart to thwart, he got forward to the twelve-pounder, ran his eye along the sight, and seated himself in the bows. The advice given to Ten-thousand by his patron, now that he was sitting alone with no one to speak to, came most painfully across his ruminations. He was about to enter—nay, had actually entered upon deadly warfare, and his hand was soon to be raised in personal encounter against the life of a fellow-creature—that very life that had emanated from the DEITY; and it was equally probable, that before another hour had elapsed he might himself be hurried into the presence of his Maker. It was true, he had no parental home to which his thoughts could revert—he had no relatives either to mourn his death, or who would suffer by his loss: but then, there was the pleasant parsonage, the affectionate clergyman and his wife—and there was dear little Eugenia! Was there no one else? Ten-thousand cast his eyes forward, and met the earnest but placid gaze of his generous benefactor, and conscience smote him that he had not sufficiently taken the noble-minded man into his grateful consideration.

'Starboard a little!' shouted the gunner; 'draw her out just clear of the launch, Johnson, so that I may try our range;—though, if my eye doesn't very much deceive me, I shall stick some of their spoons in the wall. Starboard a little, now;—there, steady, steady—port a bit, with a small helm.' He held the match in his hand, watched the motion of the boat, and when the gun attained its proper bearings, he was about to fire, but observed the lugger yawing in her course for the purpose of opening her broadside. When the privateer's quarter became exposed, he let fly, and the effect upon the enemy proved how destructive had been the aim: they could both hear and see the crashing bulwarks, whilst piercing shrieks and yells told a tale of mangled limbs, death and carnage. The pinnace hastily pulled into the line again, but not before the lugger's six-pounders came rattling amongst them; and one of the marines sitting by the side of our hero was struck in the head, carrying away the whole of the upper part of his skull, and leaving a shattered countenance that bore no resemblance to humanity. The man sat a moment supported by the convulsive clutch with which he held his musket upright between his knees; the next instant he would have fallen prostrate upon the unfortunate topman in the stern-sheets—but the youngster caught hold of one arm, and a comrade grasped the other, and eased the body gently down, and it was dragged in under the thwarts.

'You'll want the jolly's magazine and baganet, Mr. Blocks,' said the coxswain; 'so you'd better haul him out again and secure it. We shall get to small arms, I take it, presently, and we shall need to sarve out plums for the duff.'

The corporal crept down and released the cartouch-box and bayonet, which he handed aft, and then streaked out the limbs of the dead. The launch again fired, and down came the privateer's main-lug by the run, falling upon the men and preventing them from plying the sweeps. Up rose a cheer from the boats, and away they stretched out again like tantalized lions, eager to rush upon the foe. The lugger ceased sweeping, but left the sweeps out, and lashed them so as to prevent the boats getting alongside. All hands were actively engaged in preparing for defence at close quarters; the boarding-nettings were quickly triced up, and the nine-pounders and musketry made sad havoc amongst the British. But the lugger was now no longer under control, and the carronades in the two boats were loaded and fired with the most efficient precision.

'Catch hould of the jolly's musket, Ten,' shouted the gunner to the astonished lad, who, having nothing to do, was contemplating the carnage with shuddering horror. 'Aim steady, my boy, and don't throw a charge away.'

The youngster handled the weapon, and seeing one of the lugger's people busy in the main rigging seizing up the upper chain of the netting, he pointed the musket at him with a nervous quickness, pulled the trigger, and closed his eyes as he felt the recoil.

'I'm bless'd but you're a good marksman, Mr. Blocks!' said the coxswain. 'You knock'd that gull off his perch in prime style, howsomever.'

'Pretty fair for a beginning, young gentleman!' shouted the gunner. 'You won't have him to contend against when you get aboard. Load, my boy, and try again.'

A sickly tremor came over the youth at these intimations of his having destroyed a human being; but it quickly passed away: the deed of blood had been perpetrated, the Rubicon was passed, and something like ferocity curdled up all the kinder emotions of the heart. He plied his musket at every opportunity, and scarcely ever missed.

They were now rapidly cleaving the water and nearing the lugger, when Mr. Spicer hailed the pinnace. 'Mr. Blocks,' said he, 'take the cutter with you, and board, where you can, abaft. I shall pull under the bows, and meet you on the deck. The cutlass and pistol must decide it; and, hurrah, my lads! let Captain Yorick see what you can do. Give them another taste of the carronade, Blocks, and load with grape and canister.'

'Ay, ay, sir,' responded the gunner, and then repeated the orders to Macdonald astern. The master's-mate had sat perfectly at his ease from the moment they quitted the frigate; indeed, part of the time he had indulged himself with a comfortable snooze, unawakened by the firing, and unmindful of the shot. His boat had escaped all casualties, and when he shook off his lethargy, he rose up like a giant refreshed by sleep. Such encounters were no novelty to him—he looked upon them as a portion of the routine of duty, the same as mixing the grog or stowing the hold; there was a regular way of doing it, and he was so rigid a disciplinarian that he would have shoved his head to the muzzle of a two-and-thirty pounder whilst the match was at the priming, provided he had a written order in his pocket. But poor Macdonald had a failing which opposed a barrier to all his hopes of promotion. He was an excellent seaman, a clever officer, and recklessly brave, when sober; but place the *creature* in his way, and Mac would get drunk. Entreaties, persuasions, threats, remonstrances were of no avail, and but for his abominable propensity to liquor he might have been high upon the list of lieutenants, with every prospect of rising through his own merit to the very top of the tree; but Mac *would* get drunk, and therefore Mac at the age of thirty-four was still 'a young gentleman.'—On receiving his orders, the master's-mate took a survey of the lugger; told the coxswain, 'as soon as the boats separated, to place the cutter under the starboard side of the lugger's stern, where the mizen-gear was hanging over;' called to the men 'to be ready to follow him;' sat himself down again, laid his legs up upon the seat, folded his arms, and looked on apparently with as much unconcern—perhaps with more unconcern—than he would have done if entering a church.

The boats were now close to the enemy, and the musket-balls flew like hail-stones, wounding and slaying; the carronades were discharged for the last time, and their effect was most deadly. Each boat then took its station; the nettings were cut through or surmounted, and the battle commenced on the enemy's deck. The pinnance ran under the larboard-counter: Blocks made a spring at the taffrail as the vessel set abaft, but was instantly knocked back again; the second spring he was more successful, and brandishing his cutlass, he was soon in the heat of fight. Ten-thousand could not perform the same manœuvre; but he scrambled on board by aid of a rope and Johnson the coxswain, and rushing towards his patron, he found him engaged with three or four Frenchmen, one of whom had poised his half-pike, and would have passed it through the gunner's body, but the boy dashed the muzzle of his pistol in the Frenchman's face, sprung the trigger, and the brains of his opponent were scattered on the deck.

'Well behaved, Ten, my boy; shouted Blocks; you're a good lad and follows advice: remember the head or the heart.' The latter word was uttered with considerable energy, for at the same moment the gunner's bayonet was thrust with a giant's strength through the heart of an unfortunate whose pistol had missed fire. The men were soon assembled abaft, and a shout forward proclaimed that Mr. Spicer and his party had reached the deck. But they found no enemy to contest the possession; every Frenchman had jumped below, and the lugger was in the hands of the British tars.

Every part fore and aft, now that the conflict had ceased, presented to the eyes of the boarders a most horrible spectacle, the dead and dying lying stretched out like the carnage of a slaughter-house. But scarcely had the blood which flowed in deadly hostility rallied back to the heart and rendered it once more human—scarcely had the English time to contemplate the havoc that had been made, when sheets of flame burst out in amidships round the main-mast, and the mainlug was discovered to be on fire in several places.

'Was it not for losing so fine a craft,' said the first-lieutenant, 'I would shove off with the boats, and leave these scoundrels to work for their lives—sink or swim. But we must carry her into Plymouth; so out knives, men, and cut away.'

'Avast, avast, if you please, Mr. Spicer,' exclaimed Blocks. 'Let's launch yard and all overboard, holus bolus: then we shall have a clear deck.'

The suggestion was attended to; but the flames were so fierce and raged so violently that it was impossible either to cut away the sail or move the yard, and the deck had become ignited so as to threaten destruction to the privateer, whose men were coming up the fore-scuttle, and refused to render any assistance in stopping the ravages of the devastating element.

'Hand us half a dozen cartridges out of the pinnace,' shouted the gunner; and Macdonald in a few minutes passed a couple of boxes to him. 'Now then, if you please, Mr. Spicer, to call all hands away from the fire. We'll make devil fight devil.'

'What are you going to do, Blocks?' inquired the first-lieutenant. 'Keep that powder back.'

'Why, if you please to call the people off, sir,' answered the gunner, holding the cartridge-boxes wrapped up in seamen's jackets, and let 'em get anything and everything that'll hold a cupful of water, I'll be bound to dowse the fire in no time. But they must bear a hand about it, sir.'

Higher and higher rose the flames, snapping and cracking, and curling round the mast and shrouds like blazing serpents, in defiance of the exertions of the English seamen to suppress them. The lieutenant issued the necessary orders, and Blocks giving a couple of cartridges to Mr. Spicer, keeping two himself, and placing other two in the hands of Macdonald, pointed out the spots where it would be necessary to pitch them. 'Look out now,' said the gunner: 'we must heave together; and lay down on your faces, men, but be ready to throw water or stamp out the burning pieces. Now then, Muster Spicer, heave!'

The cartridges were thrown with accurate precision, the explosions were simultaneous: the burning sail was blown to atoms, and down came the mainmast over the starboard-side, whilst the fiery fragments were scattered or thrown into the air, so that at a distance it might be supposed (and this was actually the case on board the frigate) that the lugger had blown up. The moment after the explosion, the men sprang up; water was plentifuly supplied in buckets, hats, and everything that could be rendered available, and as the whole worked with a will, in the course of a few minutes all apprehensions of danger had subsided. Two half-consumed bodies were found near the stump of the mainmast.

The ship was now six or seven miles distant, but with a light air of wind that slipped her along about two knots an hour. Mr. Spicer therefore placed the severely wounded of both nations in the launch, and despatched Mr. Macdonald with her to the frigate. The casualties had been great: of the British, six were killed, and fourteen wounded; the privateer had seventeen killed, and forty-seven wounded. As soon as this was performed, the wreck of the mainmast was cleared away, sheers were promptly rigged, the stump was got out, and the upper part of the mast not being much shattered, one of the carpenter's crew quickly shaped a heel, and in two hours it was again ataunto, the rigging shortened and set up, and a small fore-lug made all ready for setting.

The captain of the privateer was a bold resolute fellow, though a little dapper man with more of the manners of a *petit-maître* than the characteristic demeamour of a seaman. He had presented his gold-hilted sword to Mr. Spicer with a thorough dancing-master's bow, and at the same time declared his utter ignorance as to the firing of the mainsail, which he strongly condemned as having been perpetrated without his commands or sanction. He complimented the British officers on their achievement, shed tears at the loss he had sustained, but laughed most heartily at the means employed to *blow* out the fire, and directed the attention of his captors to some choice claret in one of the lockers. His brass nines were especial favourites with him; he embraced them in his arms, and even went so far as to kiss them—then again fell to weeping at the thoughts of parting with such treasures;—in fact, such a strange compound of bravery and balderdash, of true courage and foppery, was scarcely ever met with, and never but in a Frenchman. His dress was a mixture of finery and filth: he wore wooden shoes, with remarkably fine but soiled silk stockings; coarse grey cloth knee-breeches, with richly-chased gold buckles; a dirty figured satin waistcoat, and an enormous frill to his shirt; a coat of taffeta cut court-fashion, with large buttons on the sleeves and laps; and a red woollen cap upon his head. Such was the revolutionist—adhering with all his soul to the frippery of fashion, yet, for the sake of his body, adopting some of the republican manners. He could not speak one word of English, and all his fine harangues would have been lost (for Mr. Spicer and Blocks were equally innocent of French), had it not been for Ten-thousand, who translated for him. The crew were pretty much of the same character as those in the *Commerce de L'Orient*, most of them desperate fellows, with the galling marks of the gyves still upon them.

The lugger at length caught the breeze, and got her head round towards the captured vessel, which, the privateer's men informed him, was an English West Indiaman from Jamaica. The frigate, observing that her intentions had been anticipated, stood also for the prize, which was making off, but very slowly; and just as a lovely evening slumbered into night, the pinnace had captured the *Kingston* of four hundred tons, laden with sugar, molasses, and rum.

The second and third lieutenants were already away in prizes; Mullion and Ancell also were gone in chasse-marées, and, unfortunately, Macdonald could not be trusted; Acheson was on the sick-list; and there was no alternative but to send the master and one of the youngsters in the lugger, whilst the gunner and his protegé took charge of the West-Indiaman. But Captain Yorick was now, on account of the number of his prisoners and the shortness of his own hands, compelled to run for Plymouth also, taking his prizes in company. At the entrance to the Channel they encountered a thick fog with light winds, so that

the vessels entirely lost sight of each other ; and during the same night a heavy squall was succeeded by a gale of wind, and it required all the laborious exertions of the people in the *Kingston* to get the sail in ; nor was it effected till the fore-topsail was blown completely away, and the mizen-topsail split to ribbons.

This was the first gale young Blocks had been in, and, to do him justice, he behaved extremely well, working with and encouraging the men : but it was a mere summer spurt—a few hours' hard puff and over ; for by the time they had got everything snug, the wind lulled, the sea went down, and they were compelled to remain on deck and make sail again. A beautiful daylight grew out of the stormy night, and at its first opening Ten-thousand enjoyed a glorious spectacle. The sky near the verge of the horizon resembled in colour what is known amongst anchor-smiths as a white-heat, and, standing out in strong relief, about five miles distant from the West-Indiaman, appeared seventeen sail of the line, nine frigates, two sloops, two cutters, and a lugger, in all the pride and pomp of war ; whilst another frigate and a lugger were approaching to speak them—the exact line in which they were sailing and their distance from each other was so well preserved, that it drew forth a burst of enthusiastic admiration from young Blocks, which was communicated to his patron, whose heart glowed in his breast 'to see,' as he said, 'the younker take to the sarvice so kindly.'

The ship and the lugger distinct from the fleet were soon made out to be the *Scratchee* and her prize, and Blocks, by aid of his glass, ascertained that one of the three-deckers carried white at the main, two of them red at the fore, and a two-decker blue at the mizen ; in fact it was Earl Howe's fleet, his lordship having under him Vice-admirals Sir Alexander Hood and Thomas Graves, and Rear-admiral John Macbride, and they were going to look for the French fleet from which Captain Yorick had so recently escaped.

The *Scratchee* spoke the admiral, and a fine breeze continuing, the frigate and her two prizes were on the following morning safe anchored at Plymouth, where also the *Commerce de L'Orient* and the chasse-marées had previously arrived.

CHAPTER V.

'I am a gay and sprightly lad,
But just come home from sea, sir.'
Sea Song.

WHATEVER passed between Acheson and Dubois subsequent to the suspicions that had been excited, the former faithfully persevered in keeping the secret of the latter, though apparently all communication had ceased between them ; and as Acheson had pretty well recovered, and the frigate was short of officers, he was pronounced by the surgeon able to do day-duty. Imperious and overbearing, he was but little esteemed either by officers or men, except that a similarity of feeling had induced the second-lieutenant, Mr. Watts, to take more notice of him than anyone else. It is a misfortune peculiar to some minds, that conviction is closed against everything but a sense of their own individuality—or, in other words, they fancy that all they do or say is right, and the rest of the world lies grovelling in error ; as we remember hearing Dr. Spurzheim once say of a gentleman who would never yield to any argument, however conclusive, 'he ash de bomp of shelf-consheit vera large.' Such was the case with Acheson ; and though a fear of corporeal suffering might influence him so as to prevent his undertaking what he had set his mind upon performing, yet nothing could operate to persuade him that wrong *was* wrong if he desired to perpetrate it. He had, almost from the first hour of his embarkation, imbibed a strong prejudice against our hero, and without endeavouring to investigate its origin—it was sufficient for him that it was so, and therefore he cherished the dislike with as much bitterness as he could have done had Ten-thousand been his most inveterate foe. This was greatly increased by the circumstances that subsequently transpired, and instead of viewing his disgrace with the captain and the pain he had suffered by his fall as the result of his own misconduct, he attributed the whole solely to young Blocks, whom he now hated with the most cordial hatred.

A great number of the prisoners were removed on the day of the *Scratchee's* arrival ; but several (amongst whom was Dubois) were unavoidably detained till the ensuing day. Captain Yorick had closely questioned several of the captives relative to Dubois ; but though many of them knew him as 'un mauvais sujet,' none could precisely fix the place of his birth ; though several believed that he was a native of Bordeaux, where his relatives still resided, and were in respectable and affluent circumstances, but they had cast off the prisoner for his mal-practices. The conflicting nature of the accounts he received, though they did not alter the opinion of the captain, yet deterred him from making an open accusation ; but he determined that the suspected individual should be sent on board the guard-ship, where it was probable he might be recognised. But the next morning, on mustering the prisoners, Dubois did not make his appearance, and though every part of the ship was thoroughly searched—every nook and corner carefully examined, yet he was nowhere to be found, and what had become of him was a mystery that no one could or would solve. The different marines who had been posted during the night were separately questioned and put under confinement with menaces of punishment, but no light whatever was thrown upon the subject. The officers who had kept the watches, as well as the quartermasters, declared their utter ignorance of the manner in which he could have escaped : and Mr. Acheson, who had been on deck during the greater part of the day till dark hours, strongly protested that he had not seen him since the first detachment of prisoners had left the frigate. There certainly was a chance that he had disembarked with the others ; but this was speedily decided, for several had spoken

to him at some hours subsequent, on the main-deck, forecastle, and even the quarter-deck.

Captain Yorick was excessively mortified; but he was too upright a man to punish where no proof of guilty connivance could be obtained, and other and more important duties occupying his attention, the affair was passed over; and he was the more readily induced to this by hearing that a dead body had been picked up between Drake's Island and the main, the description of which corresponded with the dress and person of Dubois; so that it was probable the prisoner had slipped overboard during darkness for the purpose of attempting his escape, and had been drowned in his attempt to reach the shore: in other words, as Yorick expressed it, 'he had saved the expending of a piece of new rope.' All doubts as to his being a traitor were at an end.

Mr. Acheson solicited leave of absence for home to recruit his health, which was promptly granted, with an intimation from the captain that he need be in no hurry to join again, and perhaps a voyage to some milder climate would be most conducive to his recovery. The young man took the hint, applied for and obtained his discharge into the guard-ship at Spithead; and when his traps were lowered into the boat which was to convey him to a gun-brig whose commander had given him a passage round to Portsmouth, no one regretted his departure, and little Parker danced about half mad with joy.

Ten-thousand also obtained leave; but it was only for a few hours. He had continued in charge of the prize, and his general good conduct had gained him the encouragement of his commander's approbation—and none knew better the how and the when to address the best feelings of the human heart than Yorick; he seemed to enter into every one's peculiarities—was rigid and stern and sometimes punished to excess where he deemed it requisite to make an example (for that was a main point with him); but he never neglected merit, however humble the individual who possessed it, and he never abandoned one whom he had taken by the hand as long as his conduct was deserving of patronage. At this time he was a young man not six-and-twenty years of age, devotedly attached to his profession, full of energy and resolution, but in most instances tempered with a happy discretion. As he was the experienced practical seamen afloat, so also he entered with a reckless spirit into all the peculiar characteristics of men-of-war's men ashore. At the theatre, the midnight spree, or the practical joke, none could equal him; and as he never left his companions in the lurch, he was beloved and trusted by them all. Such was the individual who had promised Ten-thousand that 'if he continued as he had begun, he shouldn't want a kick in the stern to lift him up the rattlins of promotion.'

'Well now, my lad,'—said the gunner to his protegé, 'you're bound ashore on liberty, here's a ten-pounder' (giving him a note to that amount), 'on one Abraham Newlander.—Don't make ducks and drakes of it, Ten, nor yet be niggardly. Buy some present for the parson,—not a *hand-bible*, my boy,' added he laughingly, 'but somut as you think will please his natur, as a token of respect. Never overhaul long yarns about gratitude for past favours—them are mere words, but show it in your actions, Ten—show it in your actions.—Then there's his wife,—the women loves a bit of a kick-shaw!—not forgetting young miss. Ah! you sly rogue, conscience has hoisted her colours on your cheeks;—but no matter—she's a kind-hearted wench, though she is a Dutchman—I mean woman—that is, girl.—Well, Ten, ould Jigamaree, the button-hole darner, will rig you out, and your uniform will be ready by this time.—But, I say, my boy, keep clear of pirates, and look out for squalls, 'specially 'mong the blow 'uns. Give 'em a wide berth, Ten, and don't be caught by their flying gear aloft, and the galimancoes below: they carry a taut press going before it, Ten; but, Lord love your heart, ounly just clap 'em on a wind, and they'll go to looard like a bag of sand.—Have a bright eye about you, my boy; and if any of your long-shore folk gets to pitching their palaver about "sir" and "yer honour," mark my word but they re sharks, with every row o' teeth ready to make a grab at you:—there's keen uns cruising about the latitudes of them there streets, looking out for a bite—male and female, cocks and hens, my boy.—Just call on Muster Brief, and give the ould gemman a hail;—he'll be pleased to hear of your good luck—I mean about the prizes, for there'll be two or three hundred—money I mean, for you to receive. Make my salaam to him, and say Muster Blocks, the gunner of his Majesty's ship *Scratchee*, will haul alongside of his proclamation-box—though I thinks they call it secketary—as soon as possible. Tell the parson I shan't be able to see him this here cruise, unless he'll bring the lady out—and I'll get Mr. Spicer to let me have the jolly-boat;—I'm saying, unless he comes with his lady to visit the frigate. Do all my best manners to him, Ten, and give the little Dutchman a kiss for me. Ah, you sly rogue! you grin at that, do you! Well, well—there, make sail and be a good lad: and I say, Ten, don't forget any o' your ould friends, though mayhap they may shake a cloth in the wind;—a trifle well bestowed may be a blessing to many a child of sorrow.—There, be off, and don't come aboard again with a single copper left.' The boy held out his hand. 'Oh, ay, to be sure, give us your fin, my fine fellow.' And as young Ten-thousand hurried away to the boat, his benefactor added, 'Lord love the youth! he's just arter my own heart: I hope I shall live to see him posted yet.'

The first board young Blocks made on landing carried him to the tailor's shop; and he was speedily equipped in a suit of full uniform, cocked hat, and dirk, and everything complete; and perhaps there was not a midshipman in the service who made a more handsome appearance. His countenance, browned by the sun and the sea-air, presented the very picture of good health and good humour; and being tall and stout for his age, he might have readily been taken for two years older than he really was.

His next place of call was the Roaring Boreas; and there he found the veteran Joe Breeze—his long togs with enormously large brass buttons, silver buckles in his shoes, and his chain and call round his neck—his milk-white shirt open in front, and a black neckerchief beneath the collar, loosely knotted before. There he was, in all the pride of landlordism, seated snugly in an arm-chair, in his comfortable bar (which he had made as much like a ship's cabin as possible), with a glass of grog before him, and his busy bustling wife attending to the customers, and pleased to see her husband happy.

'What cheer—what cheer, my hearty?' exclaimed Joe, rising from his seat and taking our hero by the hand with a hearty shake. 'I knew you directly, though you have bent a new suit of sails. Ah, now this is all ship-shape. I knew you'd have the "weekly account" afore long; and a tight craft you look, young gentleman.'

'Well, I declare! how he's grown!' said Mrs. Breeze, smoothing down the youth's hair as she had been accustomed to do when he was a child. 'But there's the same face, howsomever; and I never yet seed a handsomer.'

'—Except mine, ould gal,' chimed in her lord and master. 'And I'm thinking there's the same heart too, as well as the same phisog;—arn't it, Ten?'

'I hope so, sir,' answered the youth, who remembered with gratitude the numerous kind offices he had received from the worthy couple. 'I should indeed be lost to feeling, could I forget the many and great kindnesses I have received at your hands.'

'Now, avast there, my boy!' uttered Joe; 'though it's all right and proper to remember old friends, you shouldn't be overhauling the account afore their faces. Come, ould gal, arn't you got somut nice for him, as you used to have?—And how's my worthy messmate Muster Blocks?'

'I left him quite well about an hour since,' replied Ten-thousand; 'and he purposes paying you a visit before we sail again.'

'Shall be happy to have him alongside,' responded Joe; 'he's heart of oak every inch of him. Ah! well I do remember his first bringing you ashore in his arms to make a Christian of you, and the jovial spree we had that night! There arn't been many jollifications at a christening as ud beat your'n, young gentleman, seeing as I held the honourable post of president, and Harry Finn—ould Flipper, as they used to call him—was wice. Poor Harry! he lost the number of his mess when the ould *Alfred* behaved so well under Rodney, in the engagement with Count de Grasse, the day arter Captain Baynes was killed: and there warn't many more noble fellows than Harry Finn;—he was one o' your sidesmen—godfathers I think they call 'em—when the parson named you. And I suppose you're going to pay his reverence a visit—eh?'

'That is my intention, sir,' answered our hero; 'and as the walk is rather long, I hope you will not consider me disrespectful if I set out immediately.'

'Shall, though,' said Joe, with a twist of his head. 'What! come aboard the Roaring Boreas and not take so much as a pinch of salt with us? Come, come, Muster Ten, that ull never do! There's the ould gal as busy as a cockroach in a marine's kit; she's getting you a somut nice, my boy, to cherish the cockles of your heart, and it won't do to fall athaut her hawse. And I'm thinking, Ten,' added Joe, as he went across the bar, and opening a tin case, took something out, 'I'm thinking you'll have a bit of a cruise ashore, now you're an officer: and, for the sake o' the cloth, Ten, don't stand for a trifle of money to show 'em you've got them as ull keep your head above water, and rig you out as fine as a fiddle. I don't misdoubt but my ould messmate has done everything as is handsome; but there may be, mayhaps, a few odd kickshaws as you'd like to have, so here's a couple o' guineas for you. Don't say a word afore the ould gal, for the more she scrapes together the less she likes to part with it; but expend it just as you please, though never forget the onfortunate in distress.'

The 'ould gal,' as Joe called her, very soon, with the assistance of two pretty-looking handmaidens, had placed some delicacies before our hero, who, though impatient to be gone, laid in a good foundation for his journey. He then bade them farewell, and hurried to a jeweller's shop, where he purchased a pair of silver-mounted spectacles for Mr. Hector—whether they would suit his eyes or not never entered into Ten's calculations); a tortoiseshell case with two handsome cut-class scent-bottles for Mrs. Hector; a brooch for Miss Caroline, the youngest of Mr. Wellmore's daughters at the Hall; and a neat gold ring set with pearls, enclosed in a red morocco box, for Eugenia;—for all which, according to the immemorial practice on jolly reefers, he paid about thirty per cent above the usual sale price. He next repaired to a haberdasher's, where numerous little packages of laces, ribands, and other articles were soon made up, intended as presents for old acquaintances in the village; so that his ten-pound note was greatly shrunk by the time he was ready to start.

It was a lovely morning towards the close of summer; the breeze tempered the solar heat, the atmosphere was unclouded, and no painful sensation wounded the happy mind of the young midshipman as he left the busy and fœtid mart of rum, grog and pigtail tobacco far behind him, and once more luxuriated amongst the green fields, and the ripened grain bending down to entice the sickle of the reaper. Joyous were his feelings as he listened to the blithe lark carolling its sweetest lay between heaven and earth, reminding the hearer of both, or heard the full but plaintive notes of the blackbird perched amongst the foliage of the trees. They seemed to be pouring forth a welcome to the wanderer, and gaily he pursued his way, his very soul exulting with delight, and his heart communing with the still small voice of Nature issuing from her works. There was pride too, an honest pride, swelling in his breast, as his eyes glanced over his handsome uniform, the dirk suspended

by his side, and a smart cocked-hat, which he frequently unshipped for the purpose of cleaning it of dust. He had no glass to view his figure; but as 'coming events cast their shadows before,' so did his precede him, and serve as a guide to direct him in the best mode of adjusting his scraper. Yes, he was proud of being in the service of his country: but we must not omit the principal actuating sentiment which prevailed; and that was, grateful affection for those who had been to him like parents—the friends of his childhood, the individuals he had so much cause to respect and love. There was Eugenia too—the pretty Eugenia—his dear little friend and playmate, his instructor in Dutch, his pupil in English, and the sweet companion of many a happy hour. He should soon meet them—soon enjoy their society, and his spirit glowed when he contemplated the favourable circumstances under which the meeting would take place. He was no longer a boy—an irresponsible boy, but an officer in the Royal Navy; had been in battle, and gained the esteem of his brave and eccentric commander.

Onward he trudged, his pockets stowed to repletion, and his hands nearly full, till the spire of the village-steeple greeted his sight as it reared its venerable head above the trees. Oh, what joyous associations revelled in his mind as he quickened his pace! and the last half-mile seemed to lengthen itself to double the distance. At last he entered the village: but he was not immediately recognised, on account of the alteration in his dress; but stopping at one of the cottages to dispense his gifts, the children soon spread the intelligence, and hearty were the congratulations he received on every side as he tendered his donations to the cottagers who thronged round him, chiefly females, as the husbands and fathers were busy in the fields. Ribands were streaming in the air, laces were placed around many a pretty face, silk handkerchiefs adorned the necks of the rustic belles, and for a length of time Mr. Hector had an opportunity every Sunday of enjoying reminiscences of the young middy's bounty as the females sported their gaieties at church. As for the children, he bought the entire stock of the cake-shop, and the little laughing rogues carried off brown twelves and parliament, Adams and Eves, and lord-mayor's coaches, bull's-eyes and Nelson's balls, lollypops and barley-sugar; in short, every article soon vanished as if swallowed up by an earthquake, and leaving not a wreck behind. One of his guineas was left at the village public for the men when they returned from labour in the evening to refresh themselves; the other was deposited with two females to purchase tea and sugar for the old folks; and a third was left in the hands of others in whom he could trust, to treat the females in any way they should prefer: so that by the time his arrangements were made, his cash was nearly exhausted. No tongue was idle in the praise of the young sailor that day; and as rumour ran that 'he had fowt the French and made his fortun,' several of the youth subsequently entered his majesty's service, and became clever seamen.

This business settled, our hero proceeded towards the parsonage, where he was almost devoured by old Sarah, the house—indeed the only maid servant (except a little girl), who laughed and cried alternately at seeing her young master 'a navy midshipmite,' as she called him. But neither Mr. nor Mrs. Hector were at home: they had walked over to Wellmore Hall, to request permission for Miss Caroline and Eugenia to pass a day or two at the rectory previous to the departure of the latter for Holland, which was shortly expected to take place. Nothing could be more gratifying to the feelings of the youth than the prospect of enjoying the society of Eugenia under the worthy clergyman's roof; but he could not wait for their return, so he walked out towards the Hall.

Eugenia was indeed about to return to her native home. The French Revolution had stirred up the Northern Powers against the Republicans, an English army had taken Valenciennes; but the Terrorists had persuaded the people to rise *en masse*, and the Duke of York was defeated at Dunkirk. Everything was precarious—a feeling of emnity towards the Allies began to manifest itself amongst a certain powerful party in Holland, and the etiquette which was exacted by the Austrians was anything but favourable to the movements of an army. Under such circumstances, Eugenia's father (her mother was in the grave) had deemed it necessary that she should be near him whatever change might occur, and she was now of an age to superintend his household affairs.

The worthy clergyman and his lady were very graciously received by Mr. Wellmore, and the requested permission granted; refreshments were provided, after partaking of which the hothouse was visited, and some choice grapes placed in a basket for conveyance to the parsonage. The young ladies were soon ready, and accompanied Mr. and Mrs. Hector, in whose society they greatly delighted. Playful as fawns they skipped over the grass, exulting in youth, beauty, and health, till their conversation turned upon the young sailor whom they supposed far away. The exploits of the *Scratchee* had been communicated to them by Mr. Hector, and our hero's name had been mentioned in the public prints with commendation; for Captain Yorick made it a matter of course to give every encouragement to those who had only their own arduous endeavours to forward them in life. Great was their gratification at the prospects the youth had now before him, and Eugenia expressed an earnest hope that she should see him once more before the time arrived for her quitting England. They had just turned the corner of the sylvan lane leading to the rectory, and the words had scarcely escaped her lips, when she suddenly found herself clasped in the arms of a handsome young naval officer, who was by no means niggardly, as Will Blocks would have said, 'in sarving out the kisses.' Miss Caroline came in for the next embrace, nor did Mrs. Hector

escape; but the rudeness met with no harsh reproof, for the cocked-hat had fallen from the head of the youth, and the smiling face and curly hair of Ten-thousand were instantly recognised.

'Oh, fie!' said Eugenia, 'you kissa me moosh; you very fine for gentelehomme now—von wicked, bad sailors mans.'

'No, Eugenia,' returned Ten-thousand, 'Mr. Blocks sent you *them*. I have yet got to give you mine.'

'I declare, sir, you've rumpled my frock, and put all my hair in disorder,' exclaimed Caroline. 'But I am so pleased to see you!—how long are you going to stop?'

'I must be on board to-night,' replied the youth, 'as I have charge of one of the rich prizes we have taken.' And Ten-thousand felt himself an important personage for the first time in his life: it arose from a desire that his friends should think well of him.

'I am truly happy to see you safe, my young friend,' said the clergyman, 'and highly gratified at the mention which has been made of you in the public prints.'

'Public prints, sir!' repeated Blocks, in astonishment, for he knew nothing of gazettes and newspapers.

'Yes,' reiterated the clergyman, 'Your name has been made honourable mention of in more than one instance, and we have read the accounts with mingled emotions of pain and pleasure—pain when we thought of the dangers to which you had been exposed, pleasure at your escape from them.'

To have his name in print, and seen by thousands and thousands of his countrymen classed with the brave of England's pride, was indeed an unexpected honour; and never before had the lad felt so thrilling a sensation as that which was now nearly overpowering him: his heart swelled almost to bursting, his head swam giddily round, and a vow was registered in heaven that he would never disgrace the proud distinction which he knew his noble-minded commander had conferred upon him.

At this moment a number of the villagers turned the lane and greeted the party with cheers. The labouring men had returned home to their dinner-hour, and hearing of the youth's kindness from their wives and children, they had come in a body to thank him. He had always been an especial favourite, and they testified their joy by hearty huzzas, and shaking hands with the young officer 'who had fought the French and remembered the poor.' Such an exhibition was enough to make a hundred heroes.

'This is an outset in life, my young friend,' said the clergyman, when they were again alone and pursuing their way to the parsonage, 'that is most flattering to you; and I might fear that it would excite vanity in your breast, did I not feel certain that your principles are unchanged, and that you still remember the maxim I have so often endeavoured to inculcate, that, "to be truly great, you must be also humble." Never forget the scene you have just witnessed: it proceeded from the spontaneous operation of kind hearts, and to whom? to one who has fought for his country, and shared his little wealth amongst them. You are honoured as a brave defender, you are loved as a generous disposition ought to be. Should you on some future occasion hear the plaudits of the thousands, look back with honest pride and heartfelt gratitude to the villagers of —.'

'I will, sir—indeed I will,' replied Ten-thousand. 'From what I feel at this moment, I am sure I shall not show myself undeserving of your excellent instruction and the kind attention you have paid me: they have never been erased from my mind; in danger and distress, in difficulty and vexation, they have been my directory and guide.'

The pious divine stopped, and gazed upon the youth with a countenance full of heavenly benevolence and soul-loving affection: it was so benign, so divested of all earthly consideration, that the boy removed his hat and stood uncovered. The hands of the herald of salvation were spread out, they descended on the head of the foundling before him, and as the crystal-drops overflowed his eyes, he solemnly and fervently uttered, 'May the God of Israel bless the lad!'

A silence of several minutes ensued, as the group stood in the presence of their Maker, bearing witness to the blessing dispensed by His faithful servant, and experiencing that sweet communion of spirit that passeth from heart to heart. That was indeed a happy meeting! The youth recounted his adventures, his sea-fights, the storm; nothing was left untold. He excited their bursts of laughter—he beguiled them of their tears, and thus he continued to the period of his landing that morning, when he suddenly stopped, and a suffusion of shame flushed his cheeks as he exclaimed, 'I have forgotten to call upon Mr. Brief;' but scarcely were the words uttered, when a gig drove up the avenue, and out of it alighted the very gentleman himself. He had been into the country the day before, and was now returning to town, so that Ten-thousand would have an opportunity of riding back; and at the earnest solicitations of the ladies, he agreed to wait till the evening, and not start till there was just sufficient daylight left for Ten-thousand to get on board. The little lawyer was much pleased with the youth's success, both as it respected his present station and his prize-money; and there only wanted the presence of the worthy gunner to complete as joyous a party as ever assembled.

After dinner, the young folks, leaving the lawyer and the divine deep in argument, walked over to the Hall, where Blocks was warmly welcomed by everyone, and by none more than Mr. Wellmore himself.

'And so, Eugenia,' said Blocks as they were returning to the parsonage, 'you are shortly to leave England.'

'Yes,' returned she mournfully (I shall depart from the broken idiom), 'and perhaps, Ten-thousand, we may never meet again.'

This was an unexpected suggestion to the youth. It had never struck him that there was a probability of his parting for ever from Eugenia. She who had been his dear companion and play-

mate—she who had listened with patience to his wailings when calling to recollection the unprotected state in which he had been cast upon the ocean, and had so often soothed his griefs and smiled away his tears,—to part with her for ever, the thing seemed utterly impossible; and yet she was going to another land, whilst he, perhaps, might be sent on foreign service. It caused a pang he could not suppress. 'Do not fear, Eugenia,' said he, as soon as his mind was somewhat calmed; 'let you be where you will, I shall not forget you, and——. Oh yes, I feel assured that we shall have many happy meetings.'

She shook her head and looked at a neat gold ring upon her finger, bearing two united hands in a small entablature: it was the keepsake she had that day received from the young man, and in return had presented him with a locket containing her initials worked in her own hair. 'I shall often think of my friends in England,' uttered she, 'and of the pleasant visit I have made. Here, Caroline, you will be enjoying security without fear of molestation, for neither French nor any other nation can get across the water whilst the British sailors are so brave and vigilant: but my home will be exposed to foreign armies and all the cruelties of war;—perhaps the revolution which terrified me so much in Paris may reach Holland, and, oh, how horrible will it be then!'

'But you have a father to protect you,' returned the youth; 'and somehow I can't help thinking the very name of relative implies a defender. Alas! I have no one with whom I can claim kindred; and though I hope I am not ungrateful for the preservation and kindness I have received, yet I feel I could almost welcome hunger, and cold, and pain, and affliction, to know and see my parents.'

'Do not give way to melancholy thoughts, Ten,' said the noble-minded girl, forgetting her own sorrow to soothe that of the youth. 'Come, let us hope that peace will be restored, and perhaps we may often hear of one another;—at least, I hope the wretches who murdered their king will be driven back to France by your Duke of York; and then, Ten, you may likely sail to Holland, and I will be your sister.'

The hour for parting at length arrived—the farewell and sincere good wishes were earnestly expressed, and away went our hero, in the little lawyer's gig, on an autumnal evening full of delightful beauties. The shades of twilight were deepening into night as Ten parted with his companion, and hastened through the streets, towards the landing-place, where he might hire a boat to get on board the ship: but just as he reached the quay someone caught hold of his arm, and, turning round, he saw Mullion and Ancell, with several midshipmen, who speedily surrounded him.

'Hallo! Blocks,' cried Ancell, 'where are you bound to if the wind holds? My eyes! shipmate, but you carry a taut press.'

'I am going aboard, Ancell,' returned the youth. 'Little Parker is looking out for me whilst I am away, and I promised to return to-night.'

'All my eye!' said Ancell, laying hold of him. 'Come!—come along with us, my boy, and we'll show you a little of life,—plenty of wine, and lots of pretty girls.'

'Indeed you must excuse me, Ancell,' rejoined Ten-thousand. 'I passed my word not to stay beyond my leave; and I am sure you wouldn't wish me to break it.'

A general laugh followed this declaration; and Blocks had the mortification to hear himself styled 'green-horn,'—'Methodist parson,'—'gulpin,'—'flat,'—and a few other such contemptuous epithets.

'Why, you're not serious, Blocks!' exclaimed Mullion. 'Who the devil's to know whether you're aboard or not? Parker will never split. At all events, come and have a glass of wine with us; and then we'll have one round at the shops.'

'What shops?' asked the midshipman. 'I do not want to buy anything.'

Another burst of laughter excited our hero's irritability; but seeing that some of them were rather inebriated, he forbore manifesting anything like resentment.

'Were you ever at the theatre, Blocks?' inquired Ancell, who was the most collected of the party. 'We're all bound there; you'd better join us.'

'I never saw a play performed,' rejoined Ten-thousand; 'though I've often wished to see it.'

'Never *saw* a play! What a Johnny Raw you must be!' exclaimed a rather dandified *young gentleman*. 'Why, do you think we go to see the nonsense on the stage?'

'Perhaps you consider your own nonsense of superior quality,' answered our hero somewhat tartly.

'Do you mean that as an insult, sir?' demanded the other, strutting up and looking Blocks fiercely in the face.

'It is not my custom to give offence,' returned Ten-thousand; 'nor am I very patient in receiving it.'

'Oh, if you didn't mean it personal, that's another thing,' replied the dandy, turning quietly away.

'Come, let's have no quarrelling,' said Ancell. 'Blocks was not personal, but *general* in his hit; though you deserved it, Sparkes, and something with it, for calling him a Johnny Raw. However, let us have a glass of wine together, and drown animosity.'

It was not quite dark, and Ten-thousand saw no objections to complying with their request. They were soon seated in a comfortable room by themselves; the wine was brought in, and eagerly swallowed by those who already had had too much of it.

'You will go with us to the play, Blocks,' said Ancell. 'We shall have lots of sport; and the captain's away to dine with the admiral.'

'Not to-night, Ancell,' replied Blocks, firmly, though there was a strong temptation to comply, which was strengthened by the intoxicating nature of the wine he had drunk. 'Little Parker will be expecting me, and I should not like to disappoint him.'

'Oh, never mind the youngster,' urged Mullion; 'it will keep him out of mischief. I dare say he's as proud as a dog with two tails to-day at having charge of the craft.'

'If I had leave,' said Blocks, 'I should feel great pleasure in accompanying you.'

'Leave!' shouted the whole. 'What, do you think we're on leave, then? Not a bit of it!—we're all our own masters—that is, prize-masters, and so we've dined together, and now we're going to have a cruise.'

'But won't the captain be angry, Ancell?' asked Blocks somewhat seriously.

'How is he to know anything about it?' answered Mullion. 'Surely you don't mean to turn informer!'

'You do me great injustice by the suspicion, Mullion,' returned Blocks, 'and you confirm me in my determination to go aboard.'

'Oh, just as you please, my boy,' uttered the other. 'By-and-by you'll be held up as an example to the middies of the fleet.'

'He should be hung up for a pattern—like the reefer's coat in the admiral's office, which everybody looks at, but nobody cuts out by,' uttered one of the party.

'Really, gentlemen, I am not aware that there has been anything offensive to you, either in my manners or my conduct,' exclaimed Ten-thousand; 'and, therefore, why you use the language that you do, unless it is congenial with your usual habits, I am at a loss to conjecture.'

'Oh!—hum!—haugh!' said the dandy, raising a gold-set quizzing-glass to his eye, and surveying our hero; 'so you are,' drawling out the words, 'Mr. Ten-thousand Topsail-sheet Blocks, eh? picked up at sea, like a marine adrift upon a main-hatch grating.'

The colour flushed into the face of the youth as he heard this allusion to his preservation—he rose steadily from his chair—caught the dandy by the collar, gave him a rather rough shaking. 'And you, sir, by name Sparkes, had no other birth-place than a tinder-box or an armourer's anvil. Then, sir, some hammering must have been required to bring you into light; and if you don't keep a bridle on your tongue, you shall get hammered again. Pray, sir,' and he threw him from him, 'do you consider *that* personal?'

'Serve you right, *Sparkes!*' shouted Ancell to the crest-fallen dandy. 'I'm glad you've met with your *match*, anyhow—you see his *brimstone* caught *fire* in an instant.'

A general confusion ensued—most of the party rallying round Sparkes, whilst two or three, with Ancell, congratulated our hero on his displaying so proper a spirit. The foppish young man who had caused the affray was fully sensible, from the manner in which Blocks had held him in his grasp, that he would be but little more than a child in his hands; but then boxing was beneath the rank of officers, and therefore one of the party was sent to demand an apology, and in case of refusal to give a formal challenge.

The Sparkites and the Blockites had separated to different parts of the room, and much as Ten-thousand was desirous of getting away to his charge, yet he thought there would be something pusillanimous in quitting at that moment.

'Mr. Sparkes has sent me, Mr. Blocks, to demand an apology,' said the emissary.

'An apology, for what?' coolly demanded the person addressed.

The youngster hesitated,—scratched his head,—tried to look big. 'Why, sir,—for—for having—for having——'

'For having what?' asked Blocks, laughing at the ridiculous figure of the ambassador.

'Nay, I don't know exactly what it is for, said the other. 'All I know is, I was sent to demand an apology; and if you wouldn't give it, to challenge you.'

'Return then, and get better *instructed*,' said Ten-thousand, renewing his laughter.

'Get better instructed! What do you mean by that?' demanded the other fiercely. 'I have had a better schooling than ever fell to your lot, I'll swear, and will work a day's work with you any hour you please.'

'I made no allusion to your education, nor the benefit you may have derived from it,' answered Blocks. 'Indeed, no one who sees you at this moment can doubt your proficiency. But——'

'Out o' that, you bog-trotter!' shouted a young Irish Blockite, giving the plenipo a kick. 'Go to Mr. Sparkes, and tell him to come here with himself, and hand over his message by word o' mouth.—An apology! Och! by the powers, but it should be in the shape of a big *blow* that ud put Mr. Sparkes in a *flame*.'

The young Sparkite returned to his party, who were quite indignant and uttered many cruel things in reference to the circumstances in which Blocks was placed; but, though by far the strongest (nearly three to one) in numerical force—yet Ancell, Paddy Flynn, and Mullion (who at first joined the Sparkites, but afterwards came over to his shipmates), and Blocks, with two others, were not customers to be trifled with, and no one was hardy enough to renew the hostile demonstration.

'It's split, then, we are,' said Paddy Flynn, walking up to the fire-place and embracing the poker, which he carried to and laid upon the table; then, seating himself and filling his glass, he turned to the Blockites. 'Och! be sated, gentlemen, with all the pleasure in life, and it's myself will be happy to see yez. Here am I, Paddy Flynn, prize-master of the mahogany, anyhow, and sorrow the sowl shall bring himself to an anchor without lave and license from Kennedy here,' and he lifted the poker. 'Sit down, gentlemen,—sit down, and make yer lives happy. Och! by the powers, apology is it you mane? By me conscience, Blocks, but you was right! Devil a thing but the son of a tindther-box is he! Apology?—it's the Connaught way of settling a row;—knock a man down, and then kick him for falling.'

The Blockites seated themselves at the table, and some of the other party seized their glasses, intending to share in the wine: but a rap of the knuckles from the poker made them drop the

brittle material, that crashed upon the floor—and brought in the waiter.

'Did you ring, gentlemen?'

'No, but the glasses did,' replied Paddy, laughing. 'The officers have been after amusing themselves to thry how hard the craturs were; and, by the powers, they've knocked 'em into smithereens.'

'It was you, Flynn, that did it with the poker!' exclaimed several.

'What!' said the rough Hibernian, rising up; and giving Kennedy a twist, shillelagh fashion over his head, he uttered the wild Irish cry, '"Whaug! hooroosh!" who dare say I did it, or impache me veracity?' Not a tongue moved,—no Sparkite was bold enough to resist Paddy's appeal, and most of them knew the way of the boy. Flynn stood looking ludicrously stern at his opponents, and then addressing the attendant: 'You see, waither, they own the soft impachement—put it down in their bill, Sparkes debtor to Morreen seven empty wine-glasses with nothing in 'em;—and pray bring another room for the gentlemen; for, by the sowl o' me, they're heartily tired of our company;' he laid his hand on the poker and gave them a significant look—'ain't you, my fine fellows?' A ready assent was given. 'You see, waither, you must bring 'em up another room. Come, gentlemen, charge your glasses—the waither 'ell charge theirs—and I'll give you a toast, "Paddy Flynn's *striking* argument,—vide Dr. Kennedy:" och! but it *bates* Bannacher!'

The toast was drunk with applause by the Blockites, and the wine circulated so freely that Ten-thousand incautiously suffered himself to be led on till it begun to have a very sensible effect upon his usual sobriety of manner. The Sparkites left the room; and young Blocks had discretion enough to propose that they should all accompany him on board the *Kingston*, where he could treat them to some excellent Madeira. This was assented to, and having paid the bill, forth they sallied into the street, and took the way to the quay in order to return on board. But it was now past midnight; yet still Blocks determined to accomplish his object by some means or other, and Paddy, who smacked his lips at the thoughts of the Madeira, declared himself ready to bear him company. Ancell and Mullion urged many objections, but at length acquiesced; a small boat was forced from her moorings, a pair of loose paddles was borrowed from another, and the whole party, six in number, after encountering a few difficulties, repaired with our hero on board the *Kingston*. Well was it for Ten-thousand that he returned: for during his absence orders had been given to remove the West-Indiaman at daylight the following morning, preparatory to her being delivered up to the proper owners; and had Blocks remained away all night, it must have been detected, and most probably he would have fallen into disgrace. Little Parker rejoiced to see his young protector: he had walked the deck nearly the whole of the first watch to look out for him, and only a few minutes before his arrival had stretched himself on the lockers abaft to sleep.

'Have you ever fought a jewel, my boy!' said Paddy, as they sat over the Madeira and sea-cake.

'Fought a jewel? no,' replied our hero, who was not yet recovered from the effects of his potations, and was induced to keep the others company over their wine. 'What do you mean by fighting a jewel?'

'Och! then it's meself as is bothered about you, anyhow,' said Paddy, 'in the regard o' your not knowing what is meant by a jewel.'

'Flynn means a duel,' said Ancell: 'but he has not yet completed his English education, and therefore still adheres to his foreign tongue.'

'Be aisy, Ancell, be aisy!' returned Flynn. 'Didn't I get you nicely out o' throuble to-night—tell me that? now.'

'Yes, you were certainly a very admirable friend to deny all knowledge of us,' responded Mullion. 'It was what I call firing a broadside into a sinking ship.'

'Och! an' warn't it the making of you?' returned Paddy. 'Didn't the watchmen let you slip your cables quietly, when, if I'd ouned you, it's long odds but we'd all now be in the lock-up, instead of drinking Madeira. But I've a great regard for you, Mr. Blocks, and if you never fought a jewel, it's meself that ull give you some wholesome advice about it, seeing as I come from the fighting Flynns of Ballymacwhacken. There's my father—'faith! but he's the broth of a boy for snuffing a pistol with a candle at ten paces——'

'Snuff a pistol with a candle?' shouted Ancell, amidst the laughter of the rest; 'that would indeed be a grand achievement—it would be as bad as putting the match to the muzzle of a gun instead of the touch-hole.'

'It's snuff a candle with a pistol, I mane,' explained Flynn; 'and sure it was my ould father, Major Dilberry O'Flynn, that ud do that thing. I onest remember his taking a bit o' practice before breakfast, and "Stay at home, Pat," says he, "an' don't be bothering after me this morning, seeing as I'm going to shoot circular, and may chance to hit them as I shouldn't like to hurt." The divel a bit of "stay at home" was in me: so I just tracked him across the fields, and crept through the gaps—sorrow a few of them either—just to give the cattle a taste of the spring corn, and away over a bog, till it got to a nice snug place in a wood: it was cleared of the trees, and made a pretty round circus of an amphitheatre, where Natur was scene-painter as well as scene-shifter, and one of the actors was Major Dilberry O'Flynn. By the powers! but it's meself as stowed away in the big bush clane out of sight, where nobody could see me. But, presently, rattle comes a shot over my head, and "It won't do," says the major. Then he tried another and another, till at last he got a good tree for a mark, and then he rubs his pistols, and sits down upon the sod whistling "Croppies, lie down," like a whole shole of fifers. "And what ull he be after now?" thinks I, seeing as he didn't move, barring the

whistling, for nearly an hour, and I began to get hungry. Well, up comes an ould skipper in the navy, one Captain Fairfax O'Grady, ounly they called him Fiery-face, and "The top o' the morning to you, major!" says he. "The same to yourself, Captain O'Grady," says my father; "you see I'm on the ground first." "It's shooting for a wager they'll be," thinks I.—"All right and proper, major," says Captain O'Grady; "is your hand steady this morning?"—"It's odds again that," thinks I, seeing as he'd drank his four bottles of port the day before after dinner.—"As steady as the pope," says my father; "a pint of brandy is a capital thing to strengthen the nerves. That's a pretty tree, Captain O'Grady—a fine direction for the eye; and a second is bound to do the best for his principal, the same as a lawyer for his client though he may be a thief."—"All just and true," says Captain O'Grady.—"And what the divel ull they be at next?' thinks I, as I squatted down in the bush, longing for my breakfast, and wishing meself out of it.—"There's no thrembling or quakering in the arm, major, I hope?" says the captain.—"The divel a bit," says my father; "perhaps you'd like to stand up, just for a thrial of practice, captain, to get our hands in afore they come: we can take twenty paces, and I'll bet you five guineas to one I hit you twice out of three times wherever you like to name. Will you thry, just for a pastime, captain?"—"No, major, no!" says the skipper; "there's no occasion in life—I know your quality as a marksman, seeing as I've had a taste of it." And indeed he had; for one night, when they'd quarrelled, the major had allowed him to have two shots for one in the dining-room (for my father had always a pistol laid on each side of his plate, along with the carving-knife and fork and the gravy-ladles), and Captain Fiery-face O'Grady was carried to bed with enough lead in his hip to make mustard-spoons for a midshipman's mess. "There's no occasion in life," says the captain.—"Why don't they fix their mark," says my thoughts to meself, "and have done with it, so that we may go back to breakfast?" Well, just then, up comes two more, and "Maybe it isn't a grand match," thinks I; so I heard them measuring the ground, ounly ten paces, and "Gentlemen, are you ready?" says Captain O'Grady. So I took a bold peep out of the bush, and there stood my father, the major, forenent Sir Thaddeus O'Connor, a raal bullet-splitter upon a razure; and they looked just as cool and good-natur'd as a brace of griffins.—"It's a jewel, by the hookey!" thinks I, "a right arnest jewel, I'll be seeing of; and if Sir Thaddeus hits Major Dilberry O'Flynn, maybe I won't have a pop at him meself!" thinks I again, only I never said nothing, because it wouldn't have been civil; but I pulls out my own pistol and cocks it. But the major had got Sir Thaddy in a line with the tree, and "It's all up with you now," thinks I.—"Where shall I hit you, Sir Thaddy?" says my father, as pleasant spoken as a priest at offering-time.—"In the head or the heart, where I mane to hit you," says Sir Thaddeus.—"By the gridiron of St. Antony! but not so bad as that," answers the major; "it ud be cruel and onfriendly. Now, I'll just plant a seed in your pistol-hand, if you'll be kind enough to allow me."—"I'll bet you ten pound to two upon that," says O'Connor's second, one Mr. Terence Mahoney, a great sporting character in the county.—"Say guineas," says my father, "and I'll take you."—"Done!" shouts Mr. Terence: "and now, gentlemen, you're to snap the triggers by signal."—"Are you agreed, Sir Thaddeus O'Connor?" asked my father.—"Fire and be d— !"—bellows Sir Thaddy, and both pistols went off with one report—down dropped the O'Connor in the thick of the smoke, whilst the major stood up as straight and as stiff as a marine at drill; and "I'll throuble you for ten guineas, Mr. Terence Mahoney," says he.—"You've lost!" says Mahoney.—"I've won!" says my father.—"You've hit him in the head," says Mahoney, as he raised up Sir Thaddy.—"But I hit him in the hand first," says my father: "as for the head, it was all his own fault, for houlding the pistol so high." And, sure enough, so it was.—"All's one for that," says Terence; "you've lost your bet."—"The divel a bit!" says the major: "but if you don't feel it convanient to acknowledge the debt, take up t'other pistol, my sowl! and I'll give you a receipt in full under my own hand."—"Done!" says Terence: bang went the pistols, and Mr. Mahoney embraced his mother—the major staggered, but didn't fall, and I jumped out and ran to him. "You divel's imp! what are you doing here?" says he.—"It's to see the jewel," says I; "and now we'll go home to breakfast." Well, Sir Thaddeus O'Connor was only stunned a bit, for the ball had just grazed his head down to the bare scull; and Mr. Terence Mahoney jumped up again with a ball in the small of his leg: "You've kilt me, major," says he. "It's down here; but I've saved my ten guineas, anyhow."—"A mighty dear bargain I've made!" says my father, "ten guineas for shooting a *calf;* but are you satisfied?" They all expressed their satisfaction. "Then come to the castle to breakfast, and the doctor and a full bottle will soon make matters up." So they all agreed, and away we started. "What did you fight about, father?" says I. "Ask some of the others," answers he, "for I can't for the life of me recollect." So I asked the others; but none of them remembered what it was, only that there was a dispute and a challenge. When we got to Castle Flynn, the doctor was in readiness, and so he dresses the hand, the head, and the leg. "And now," says my father, "I'll just throuble you, doctor, to visit a patient as I've got in the house." And "Who the divel will that be?" thinks I. So as they went out, I stales out after them into the major's own room—and "Where's the patient?" asks the doctor. "Whisht, whisht, you sowl!" says my father, pulling off his coat, and stripping his shirt-sleeve right to the shoulder; "just take me out this pistol-ball,"

says he, showing the wound in the fleshy part of his arm : " it was O'Connor that put it there ; but I said nothing, that he mightn't crack of his firing. Dextricate it, doctor dear, and never spake sorrow the word about it." The doctor did as he was bid—the ball was taken out—and a jovial day they had of it afterwards, and another jewel in the evening in the long gallery ; but no harm was done, beyont an eye knocked through the head of one of my ancestors that hung against the wall, and an ould lamp shattered to pieces. That day I larned one thing, and I'll tell it you—always in a jewel get your antagonist behind a tree." A general laugh followed this advice, and Paddy immediately corrected himself : " It's get a tree behind your antagonist, I mane, to make sure of your mark. I'll engage there's nothing like a tree.'

'But suppose the challenge should be given where there are no trees," said Mullion ; 'what would you do then ?'

'I wouldn t fight till I'd come to one,' says Paddy with the utmost gravity.

'But on board and out at sea,' said Ancell, 'where there's no possibility of making an excuse?'

'An excuse is it you mane? Och ! then there's no use in it in life,' answered Paddy, 'but fight it out ; and if you can't do anything else, why, take the cross-tree.'

CHAPTER VI.

'All on a sudden, darken'd are the skies,
The lamp of heaven obscured, the winds do rise,
Waves swell like mountains.'

FLAVELL.

IN a few days after the events recorded in last chapter, the *Scratchee* received all her officers and men from the prizes, and once more stood out to sea with a light breeze, intending to run over towards Cape Barfleur. At daylight the next morning, the flashes of guns and their thundering reports proclaimed that a severe action had commenced in-shore, and by the aid of glasses they discovered it was between two large frigates apparently well matched. Captain Yorick made all sail ; but when within a couple of leagues of the combatants, the wind utterly died away, and they lay perfectly becalmed. For upwards of an hour did they continue in this tantalizing condition, and Yorick stamped, raved, prayed, and swore in his best style, till a light air sprang up, and the *Scratchee* once more moved through the water ; but the affair was over before she got up, and the national frigate *Réunion* was in possession of his majesty's frigate the *Crescent*, Captain Saumarez, after a hard engagement of two hours and ten minutes, during which time they were so completely enveloped in smoke that none of their manœuvres could be distinctly seen from the eight-and-twenty.

This was a gallantly-fought action, and to the astonishment of every one, the *Crescent* had not a single man touched or injured by the enemy s shot, whilst the *Réunion* suffered most severely by the fire of her antagonist, having about forty officers, seamen, and marines killed and sixty severely and slightly wounded. Here then the *Scratchee* came in for more prize-money, the French frigate being purchased by the government and added to the British navy. Captain Yorick having accompanied the *Crescent* and her prize across the Channel, stood away to the westward, intending to resume his station in the bay ; but the light winds retarded his progress, and on the third day, when the breeze freshened, a squadron of five ships hove in sight, which were supposed to be the roving cruisers under Sir J. Warren ; but on a nearer approach the private signal remained unanswered, and their character became well known. The *Scratchee* stood from them and showed her colours ; the ships of the squadron hoisted English ensigns, but the cut and make of their sails was French, and a general chase commenced after the eight-and-twenty. The French frigates were each heavier than the *Scratchee*, and Captain Yorick subsequently came to learn that the squadron consisted of the *Carmagnole*, forty guns ; the *Uranie*, forty guns ; the *Résolue*, thirty-six ; the *Semillante*, thirty-six, and the *Espiègle* corvette (all afterwards taken by the British, the latter by the *Nymphe* and *Scratchee* together in the following month). These ships carried every stitch of canvas to come up with Yorick, pursuing him close in-shore, but happily he escaped into Falmouth, and information was immediately forwarded to Lord Howe, then lying with the English fleet in Torbay.

Twelve months rolled rapidly away, and young Blocks, for the short time he had been at sea, had not only seen much stirring service of almost every kind, but he had also acquired considerable proficiency in the practical part of a seaman's duty. The success of the frigate continued unabated, and the young midshipman's share of prize-money did not amount to less than £800, which was safely deposited under the charge of Mr. Brief. Captain Yorick narrowly watched the youngster's progress, gave him every encouragement to persevere, was strict but kind, and employed those means that were best calculated to produce fixed principles within the mind.

It was a beautiful daybreak on a summer's morning, that the *Scratchee*, on her return to her station after convoying a fleet of merchantmen to the Downs, was hugging the French coast close in under Cape Lailly : the officer of the watch, Mr. Stowage, was sweeping the horizon with his glass, when suddenly his attention became fixed, and instantly afterwards as the look-out man was going aloft, and had got half-way up the fore-rigging, he shouted, 'Sail, O !'

''Tis well you have unplugged your day-lights,' said the master in reply to the man, and still keeping his eye steadily directed towards the object. 'A sail it is indeed,' he muttered to himself, 'for there's canvass aloft ; but as for the craft that carries it, why then I'm thinking it's just no more than Westminster Hall put into commission, and come out to give the lawyers a cruise. What do you make of her, quarter-master ?'

'Why, sir, she looms again' the sky somut like the marine-barracks adrift,' responded the

man, who from age and service was a sort of privileged talker. 'At all events, she's not——'

'A parish-church,' interrupted the master, cutting his harangue short with some degree of petulance, 'I never asked you what she is not.' Then turning to Blocks, who was using his glass at a respectful distance and wondering what the dark mass could be, he added, 'Look out, young gentleman; there's more prize-money. Yon's a gin-tank afloat, but, I suspexts, has shifted her cargo and got somut better for us.'

'Do they smuggle in such immense unwieldly vessels as that, sir?' inquired Blocks, who mistook the old man's meaning.

'No, no, boy,' returned the veteran, 'she's a reglar Dutch Ingeeman, and from the way she's standing, is trying for a French port.' Then, turning to the helmsman, 'Keep her away, boy; bend on the Crappo colours abaft. And, young gentleman, rouse the watch, and see all clear for making sail.'

The master went below to inform the captain, who in a few minutes afterwards made his appearance on deck. He looked at the stranger, and then, hailing aloft, inquired 'whether any other vessel was in sight?'

'Yes, sir,' replied the man on the foretopsail-yard, 'there are two luggers right in under the land.'

'The Dutchman has altered his course, sir,' said the master, 'and has bore up as if for our own coast.'

'We'll make short work of him presently, Mr. Stowage,' responded the captain, as he earnestly scrutinised the luggers, who were carrying on about four miles distant, making a clear run for St. Valery en Caux. 'It would be a hopeless task to chase those ——," he observed, 'and now for Mynheer. Forud there! send a piece of cold iron into that elephant haystack.'

The order was promptly obeyed; the shot struck the chase, and instantly she hauled to the wind, and laid her maintopsail to the mast. A very short time brought the frigate alongside, when the stranger proved to be a Dutch East Indiaman, which had been picked up during the night by the two luggers then in sight.

A prize-crew was immediately mustered, for most of the Dutchmen had been removed, and Macdonald (who had for some time past refrained from his usual intemperate habits) was placed in charge, with Blocks for his second, Yorick giving orders that they should without loss of time make the best of their way for the Downs, and subsequently for the River Thames. The old Noah's ark shovelled along tolerably well with a free wind; but scarcely had they lost sight of the frigate than it fell perfectly calm, and though they were then at least ten miles from the shore, a number of row-boats were distinctly seen pulling out towards them from Dieppe, whilst, to the deep mortification of our hero, Macdonald had not been able to resist the temptation which laid in his way, and was sinking fast into beastly intoxication. Still there was nothing to fear from the row-boats: he had fourteen good seamen and four marines belonging to the frigate, twelve Dutchmen, and ten long-twelves in each broadside (the ship had been captured by boarding, whilst the Mynheers were smoking their pipes), with plenty of ammunition.

'Do you think they mean to attack us, Jem?' said the young officer, addressing a worthy old friend of the quartermaster. 'They pull out with a good show of determination.'

'Mayhap they'll try it on, Mr. Blocks,' returned the quartermaster. 'Them chaps have plenty o' pluck for a dash, though they can't stand hard hammering. But let 'em come, sir; we've had some pretty fair *target* practice lately, and I'm not misdoubtful but we shall expend some on 'em.'

At this moment Macdonald appeared on deck, and observing Blocks and the quartermaster in conversation, with a self conviction which still lingered about him, as the last glimmer of reason, he suspected that he himself was the subject they were talking about. 'What's all this, Blocks?' said he, rather inarticulately. 'Come aft here, sir, and don't be plotting mischief amongst the people.'

Blocks complied with the order, for he had no wish to irritate him; but the quartermaster, nettled at the words, promptly replied, 'If nobody makes no more mischief nor him, Mr. Macdonald, there wouldn't be much harm done in that 'ere way, anyhow.'

'Silence, you mutinous scoundrel,' roared Macdonald, infuriated by the liquor he had swallowed.

'I'm no mutinous scoundrel,' returned the veteran, with that degree of coolness and collectedness which generally operates on passion to stir it to extreme. 'I'm a plain sober tar as knows his duty, and does it.'

The term 'sober,' whether intended as a hit or not, produced the same effect. 'Do you mean to say I'm drunk?' demanded the master's-mate, his rage bursting all bounds. He staggered into the cabin, but in two minutes reappeared with a pistol in each hand. 'Here's mutiny—mutiny!'—he exclaimed. 'Who will—who dare dispute my orders?'

'No one, Macdonald,' said Blocks mildly. 'Come, come below, and let us have an overhaul, for——'

'Silence, you brat!' interrupted Macdonald fiercely. 'I know your schemes, and by —— I'll take the law into my own hands if you disobey me. Go forud, quartermaster, and take your station on the fokesul.'

The man hesitated for a minute, but, urged by Blocks's voice to obedience, he was walking away, when Macdonald shouted, 'Come back here, you sir. What! you wouldn't move till Blocks spoke, eh? Now, sir, come back here, and stay aft that I may have my eye on you.' The quartermaster returned, but did not touch his hat as he passed, and this was made a fresh source of irritation. 'So you mean to insult me, do you? Avast, sir! by ——, I believe you're drunk.'

There was something so extremely ludicrous in this charge, it had in its purport and manner

so much of the *vis comica*, that the seamen, who had collected near the gangways, could not refrain from laughter. The Dutchmen looked on with their accustomed gravity; whilst the Frenchmen joined in the laugh, merely for the sake of companionship in mirth. This produced a climax.

'If nobody had bull'd* the cask more nor Jem to-day, there wouldn't have been much grog drunk,' mumbled the quartermaster, and the next instant a ball would have passed through his head, but for the timely intervention of Blocks, who sprang forward and struck up the muzzle of the weapon.

'For shame, for shame, Macdonald!' uttered our hero. 'Give me up that pistol instantly. This is getting too serious to be trifled with.'

'I don't value his crackers a tinker's ——,' exclaimed the quartermaster, totally unmoved by the occurrence; 'but arter sailing together so many years——'

'You must lay aside that pistol, Macdonald,' said Blocks, who observed that the eye of his messmate was rolling with frenzy. 'Here's the enemy coming out from Dieppe, and——'

'Ay, ay, I see it all,' returned the master's mate. 'You've mutinied, and mean to deliver up the craft. What enemy? where is the enemy?' The quartermaster was again about to speak, but Blocks sternly insisted upon his being silent. 'I see no enemy,' continued the infatuated being. 'Away aloft there, men, and take a reef in the topsels.'

'There is not a breath of wind, Macdonald,' said Blocks, who saw the impropriety of sending their own seamen aloft, whilst the Dutch and French remained below, and the row-boats were nearing them fast, though not within gun-shut. 'Had we not better get a gun or two to bear upon the boats as they advance?'

'All humbug!' returned Macdonald; and then, turning to the quartermaster, 'Here, you, sir, hand yourself into the cabin.'

'I can obey a man in his senses, Mr. Blocks,' argued the petit officer, addressing our hero; 'but I'm —— if I'm going abaft there with a madman merely to have an oilet-hole worked in my carcase.'

Poor Blocks scarcely knew what to do. He had received many, many kindnesses from Macdonald, who when sober was as clever an officer as ever breathed. He saw no alternative but to take the command from him, but he wished to do it quietly by persuading him to turn in; and when intoxication had passed away, he was well aware that no one would more lament the impropriety of his conduct than the individual who had been guilty of it. The quartermaster had been an old shipmate of Macdonald's, and had screened him on several occasions, which led to a familiarity derogatory to the distinctions imposed by discipline: the seamen, on the other hand, knew but little of him, and only saw that their lives were at the mercy of a man literally mad drunk;—they pressed aft, therefore, partly in self-defence, and partly because the barrier had been broken down by the officer himself which ought to have kept them at a distance,—they now ranged themselves in a body on the quarter-deck.

'I thinks, Mr. Blocks,' said one of them, who, though a notorious drunkard, put himself forward as spokesman,—'I thinks that for the good of the sarvice you ought to put Muster Macdonald under confinement.'

'Stand back, and clear the quarter-deck,' shouted Blocks with firmness and promptitude: 'when I want your address, I'll seek it.'

'But we think it right to give it, sir, without axing,' answered the man; 'and if you don't clap him in limbo, why mayhap we may do it for you.'

The words had scarcely passed his lips, when the fellow lay prostrate on the deck from a blow given by the still strong arm of the sturdy old quartermaster. 'Lie there, you drunken swab!' exclaimed Jem, standing erect over his fallen shipmate. 'What! did ye think I was going to stand by and hear you insult a young officer as wishes to do his duty, and will do it too. But God A'mighty has stowed a commodity in his heart which never formed any part of your cargo, you lubber!—and that's humanity. *You* talk of clapping a man in limbo?' and he spurned the fellow away from him with his foot.

The man rose up and cried out, 'I say, shipmates, will you stand treatment like this? If you do, then you're a pack of lubberly cowards!'

A general laugh followed this appeal.

'What treatment, Joe?—you've had it all to your own cheek,—it warn't sarved out among us,' was the response; and the crest-fallen advocate sneaked away.

'Men,' said Blocks, taking advantage of the change in the position of affairs, 'it is true that I am young and but inexperienced; yet I know my duty, and cannot want for efficient support whilst you do yours. As for my poor messmate,'—his voice faltered with emotion, for recollections rushed across his mind,—the generous feelings of those whom he addressed were more forcibly touched than by any power of language, and a simultaneous cheer burst forth from the worthy tars, chacteristic of the Yorick school. But Macdonald, who stood steadying himself by the capstain, still retaining his second pistol, on hearing the cheer, raised the weapon, pointed it at our hero, who turning sharply round, received a ball through the fleshy part of his left arm, which otherwise probably would have passed through his heart. The wretched man was immediately secured, a handkerchief was bound tightly round the wounded arm, and as the row-boats still persevered in advancing, the men went to the guns. But here another source of difficulty was presented to our hero, as on examination it was discovered that the Frenchmen, taking advantage of the confusion upon deck, had cut nearly through the strands of every breeching, and, in some instances (no doubt all

* When a spirit-cask was emptied, if the seamen could clandestinely get hold of it, a small quantity of water was introduced through the bung-hole, the cask bunged up and shook and rolled about till the water became grog. This was called 'a bull.'

would have been served the same had time allowed), nails were driven down into the touch-holes. The craft, however, was as steady as a castle on a rock, and four guns were brought to bear; but the shot-lockers were empty, the Frenchmen having quietly slid the shot overboard. Still the four effective guns were loaded, and with good marksmen much might be done with a first discharge.

'Send every rascal of the privateer's-men on deck here,' said Blocks; and as soon as they were mustered so that no one was missing, a rope was passed several turns round the whole of them and hove pretty taut. The marines, with their loaded firelocks, took them under charge; whilst the English seamen went to the guns, and the Dutchmen were employed in reeving new breechings and endeavouring to clear the spikes from the touch-holes. The row-boats came on without any regular order, and the first shot that was thrown from the ship struck one of the headmost of them, and tearing out two or three streaks between wind and water, she instantly sunk. The nearest boats to her did not stay to pick up their swimming companions, so eager were they to board; but a second boat sharing the fate of the first, checked them in their progrees, and they lay for a few minutes upon their oars.

'Here's another enemy a-coming, Mr. Blocks,' said the quartermaster. 'Them there Mynheers must secure the guns the best way they can, and skim aloft to roll up the canvass; there's a heavy squall ull be down upon us directly from the nor'-west;—not that I'm thinking it will give us anything of a lust to starboard or to port, take us which way it comes; but the cloth arn't none o' the best, and mayhap it may turn to a summer gale. Them fellows won't come nigh us again—they can read the face of the heavens in their own latitude just as well as a purser's steward surveys his mess-books, and they see there's heavier artillery nor ours priming again' 'em.'

A distant flash of lightning and the bellowing of thunder verified the old man's observation, and no time was lost in endeavours to make everything snug. The row-boats had had enough of it, and were retreating from whence they came; and the Frenchmen were liberated and compelled to assist in shortening sail. At length, down came the squall, lashing up the waters to a white foam, and spreading a dark pall over the face of the sky. The *Jonge Vrow*, of Amsterdam, scarcely felt its effects on her hull, but her masts trembled and quivered, and much of the gear snapped like tow: heavier and heavier grew the gale, and higher and higher rose the sea, breaking over the unwieldly craft as if she had been a half-tide rock.

'It ull be a sneezer, Mr. Blocks,' said the quartermaster; 'and as we are well down to looard, a range of the cables would do no harm;—I'll just go and overhaul the tier, for mayhap the Crappoes have been playing the same trick as they did upon the breechings.'

The cables, however, were found perfect, and preparations made for anchoring in case of necessity. Night came on—a red-eyed, fiery, tempestuous night:—it was not the dreary, dark, and frowning gale of winter, but the might and pageantry of power, priding itself in its strength;—it was not as the sullen roar of December's storms, pouring out destruction in its habitual rage; but it was like the wild laugh of some bacchanalian tyrant, spreading devastation to make him sport.

The lumbering ship made but little headway—she went bodily to leeward, when Macdonald, having in a great measure recovered from his intemperance, resumed the command. He had but little recollection of what had transpired, and Blocks forbore to mention it whilst they were in difficulty. The master's-mate was a thorough seaman, and a good pilot; the ship had settled down into the bight near Treport, and he immediately wore her round upon the starboard-tack, keeping her a point off the wind to see if she would draw ahead; but nothing would make this mammoth move in any other direction than sideways, like a crab, and there seemed to be every probability of going ashore.

Hour after hour, as they sounded, the water got gradually shoaler,—the high land frowned above their heads, whilst its base groaned beneath the heavy breakers that dashed and foamed in hideous distortion below;—still there were the anchors, and men were stationed ready to let them go. Unhappily, however, several of the prize crew had taken advantage of the inebriation of their officer, and liquor being plentiful, they also had become intoxicated. The Frenchmen entertained no hopes of re-taking the ship; but, during the confusion that prevailed, they lowered one of the quarter-boats without its being perceived.

At this very instant a shift of wind took place to the south-west, and whilst again wearing the ship round, Blocks, who was standing in a rather exposed situation, clearing the mainbrace from the davit, missed the boat. He was about to shout to Macdonald, when a sudden blow sent him flying overboard, and he fell just outside the yawl, into which several of the Frenchmen had already got. Supposing it one of their party, the alarmed youth was dragged in amongst them; but when they found he was an enemy, they were about to commit him again to the deep. This, however, was overruled; he was told to remain quiet if he valued his life; in a few minutes the other prisoners embarked, the towline was let go, and the boat soon dropped out of sight astern.

At first the Frenchmen wished to make for Treport; but the tide was out and the sea broke too heavy to attempt the beach—so they out oars to pull for Boulogne or Calais, and subsequently the latter harbour was determined upon, as they would just reach it by daylight, and in tide-time. The gale, however, came down heavier than ever, and the shift of wind had kicked up a nasty cross sea that several times had nearly filled the boat so as to compel all hands to get to bailing.

It was whilst thus engaged off Cape Grisnez

that the yawl came broadside-to; a recoiling roller from the shore met the approaching wave exactly at the spot;—the concussion nearly crushed the clumsy vessel and sent it to the bottom. Blocks could swim extremely well; but the awfulness of his situation when he rose from the dark grave of waters that had engulphed most of his companions smote fearfully upon his heart; the noise of the billows as they toppled and threw their spray high above his head—the howling of the wind as it swept over him—the roaring of the breakers, was enough to appal the boldest mind, and he who had been rescued a helpless infant from the fury of the elements, now that he was enabled to struggle for himself, quailed before it. Still he struck out, and finding his hands hit against something hard, he grasped at it, and seized one of the oars that had floated;—in a short time he possessed himself of another, and placing them under his arms, they buoyed him up with a little assistance from his feet. To render himself as light as possible, Blocks parted with his jacket and waistcoat, and subsequently, as the wash of the sea rendered his shirt an embarrassment, that also was abandoned. The water was rather warm than otherwise; but the recoil of the swell frequently tumbled him over and over, though he still held firmly by his friendly support. The wound in his arm was very painful, and the blow that knocked him overboard had stiffened his back and neck;—but, oh! how inestimable is life to one who feels and knows that he is on the verge of eternity!—the power that is actuated by animal instinct may grow weaker and weaker till it utterly fails, whilst the mind remains strong in its reason, though increasing in its suffering.

Our hero's nervous system had undergone great agitation from excitement during the previous day, and the labours of the night to counteract the effects of the gale had rendered him weary; nor can it excite surprise that, now he found himself alone and desolate on the turbid waters, his spirit should be depressed or his heart dejected. But the gale subsided as the bright herald of the day gradually spread its light over the face of the heavens; and, oh! what tongue can tell—what language can describe the revival of hope in the breast of poor Blocks as he saw the dimness of night yielding to the sweet influences of the early dawn! and yet how long—how very long it seemed to linger, as if in mockery at his anxious longings for help.

At length a flood of sunshine filled the air, and shortly afterwards spread its warm beams upon the waters. The breeze lulled, the waves became smooth: Ten-thousand saw the high cliffs towering above him. He was about a mile from the shore, carried rather rapidly along by a spring flood-tide. At every rise of the swell he gazed ardently and anxiously around, but no aid appeared: he beheld the white cliffs of England gloriously lighted up by the rays of the sun, but he feared his foot would never again tread on British soil. The swell and the indraught were hurrying him towards the rocky shore, on which the breakers dashed most fearfully, and he knew he had not strength to resist them. Consciousness now seemed to waver, and he clutched the oars beneath his arms as with a death-grapple; a flickering mist was spread like a dark veil before his eyes; his senses became bewildered; a pleasing delirium crept upon him; shadowy forms flitted before his visionary view; a deafening noise, like the shouts of a tumult, sounded in his ears, and he sank into slumber. Horrible were his dreams; he might indeed exclaim with Clarence,

'Ye gods! methought what pain it was to drown.'

Suddenly he awoke, but his eyes were still closed; his supporters were gone, and yet he felt the agitation of the waves; he stretched out his hands, and they fell upon a human face! 'Was he then among the dead at the bottom of the sea?' He shuddered and sprang up, but a heavy blow instantly prostrated him again; he opened his eyes, and found himself in the little bed-place on the starboard side of a small cabin, whilst the sleeper he had touched lay on the lockers by his side, and the blow was caused by his striking his head against a beam. The fact was, that just as sensibility was sinking into utter helplessness, a small cutter privateer from Boulogne was running along the coast for the North Sea, and passing close to our hero, had picked him up. Means had been used to resuscitate with success; he had been put to bed in the captain's berth, and recovered, as we have already seen.

Ten-thousand lay ruminating on his situation as he felt the little vessel dance lightly along, and heard the voices of the crew on deck. That he was in the hands of the French, he could tell by their language, and the questions he debated in his mind were, to what cause should he attribute the peril from which they had, no doubt, rescued him, and whether he should declare himself an English officer. He had no papers—no certificates—no uniform to show, and the dread of a prison wrought terror in his heart; whilst if it were only possible to pass for a Frenchman, there were prospects of escape. He spoke the language with all the freedom and fluency of a native, and he might represent himself as of English descent, born in France. The story of the Dutchman would do, making himself one of the prisoners who had quitted her; his wound would be corroborative evidence. For the present, however, he determined to lie perfectly still; and soon afterwards a seaman descended, and aroused the sleeper, to say that 'the Republican flag was flying at Ostend.'

'The —— English must have left it, then, and retreated?' said the awakened man; 'or is it a *ruse*?'

'You had better judge for yourself,' responded the first. 'There is heavy firing along the coast; and if the English have fled, there will be something handsome in the way of plunder.'

The individual addressed arose from the locker. Blocks heard him exclaim, 'Pauvre diable!' but he kept his eyes closed, and the two immediately went on deck. For a full hour he lay in torment of mind and in pain of body. At the expiration of that time, the movements of

the vessel became steady, and he was aware she was gliding in smooth water—probably had entered Ostend. This, in fact, was the case; and *Le Juliana* (the name of the cutter) in a very short time was lying quietly moored at the platform.

Blocks could hear the roaring of artillery and the shouts of many voices; but they were distant, whilst near at hand all was sullen silence. There was no tread of feet upon the deck, no hum of conversation, and, unable any longer to resist curiosity, he arose and ascended the companion; but it was locked, and egress in that direction was denied. Mounting the table, he removed the skylight with as little noise as possible, but no one appeared to prevent his operations; he climbed on deck, but not a soul was to be seen. Again descending, he slipped on a pair of canvas trousers—he already had been supplied with a shirt; a pair of shoes, somewhat too large, were made free with; and mounting a red cap with a cockade in it over all, he quitted the cutter, passed through the heavy barricades that had been recently erected, walked stealthily along the quay, and then boldly entered the town.

The musketry was still ringing forth its death-peals. Blocks heard the balls whistle past him, but he had no shelter to fly to; for should he return to the cutter, it was more than probable that his fate would be sealed. The wounded and dead were lying in the streets; the Republican troops, like infuriated demons, were smearing their faces with the blood of the slain; brutal intoxication heightened the ingenuity of hellish cruelty; and Ten-thousand was nearly betraying himself, on seeing a young mother, with her infant in her arms, surrounded by the monsters, and supplicating mercy on her bended knees. The baby crowed and laughed as if pleased with the *mêlée;* its looks and innocence might have softened an obdurate heart, but these devils knew no pity. One of them thrust his bayonet through the delighted child, and while thus impaled, he shouldered his fusee amidst the shouts of his companions. But oh, that wretched mother! she sprang upon her feet; she gazed at her writhing and yet screaming babe; her eyes seemed starting from their sockets; a rigid sternness came upon her features; her arms were immovably outstretched, her fingers were curved and fixed, her under jaw dropped; there was a deep hollow groan—and the woman was a corpse! But she did not instantly fall; in all the distortion of death she stood for over a minute in the same attitude, and then came heavily to the ground.

So horrible a spectacle nearly maddened our hero. He had heard and read of such atrocities, and shuddered at the contemplation of man becoming a wolf to his fellow-creatures; but now the evidence was practically before his eyes—he had himself witnessed it, and rushing from the spot, he fled he knew not whither.

In one of the deserted streets, the door of a handsome house stood open, and he entered, hoping to find shelter; but, alas! the sounds of lamentation were also here. In a large apartment of which he commanded a view from an anteroom, sat a French officer writing; an orderly sergeant was at a short distance from the table: groans and sobs proceeded from the interior, but Blocks could not tell from whence, though they appeared to be the bitter wailings of females. Our hero, conjecturing that the sergeant would soon withdraw, noiselessly crept to a spacious closet in the ante-room, where he concealed himself. He was right, the orderly received the paper and departed. The officer remained; but almost immediately afterwards nearly a dozen soldiers rushed in, and, in defiance of the officer's commands, two young ladies were dragged out by these brutes, shouting, 'Vive la République!—Mort aux émigrés.'

'Arrêtez, arrêtez!' cried the officer, following them. 'They are my sisters; I am their brother. You will not shed the blood of friends?'

'Vive la République!—Mort aux émigrés!' was the response, and the sounds grew into confusion as the party receded.

Blocks entered the room in which the officer had been sitting, and stretched upon a table in one corner lay the bloody body of an aged man. His dress was of a superior kind;—black silk knee-breeches and silk stockings of the same colour, a white satin embroidered waistcoat, and a black coat with the insignia of nobility on the left breast. His hair was silvery white, and even in death there was a look of sorrowful placidity on the features. Blocks readily read the tale. The corpse had been one of the noblesse, who with his daughters had quitted Paris at the Revolution, leaving his son behind. The latter, either to save his patrimonial estates, or from choice or necessity, had joined the Republicans, and attained the rank of colonel in the army, under Jourdan and Pichegru. The father had been unable to retreat with the English when Lord Moira retired from Ostend, and had fallen a victim to the sanguinary forces; and now the daughters—but their fate was not yet known.

On the table at which the officer had been sitting lay a light hussar's jacket; removing which, Blocks beheld a brace of pocket-pistols, a gold watch, and a silk purse, which had been concealed under it. He found the pistols were both loaded and primed, and the purse was heavy with louis-d'ors. What should he do with them? He was destitute of money, he was without arms, and both were now before him. The deliberation was short; they were speedily secured about his person. But the watch?—if any one entered, he would certainly take it; and perhaps by doing the same himself, he might restore it to the owner. Scarcely had he appropriated the articles, when he heard approaching footsteps. To retreat to the closet was impossible; he therefore hastily crawled beneath the table on which lay the dead body, and the long side-flap descending to the ground, entirely screened him from observation. The individual entered the apartment and groaned most heavily. Blocks cautiously peeped out, and saw the young officer sitting at the table, his face concealed by his hands, but every limb gave indication of considerable agitation. In a few minutes he arose and stood over the corpse.

'Father!' he uttered in a tone of melancholy entreaty, as if the dead could hearken to his voice,—'Father! it is Eugène that calls.' He paused about the space of a minute, and then added in a deep sepulchral murmur, 'He will never answer more! And I?' he suddenly ejaculated, 'leagued with devils who have dishonoured those grey hairs and shed this blood—ay, my blood, for the same vital stream flows in my veins.—Father! Eugène implores you—say that you forgive me! I did it for the best, and it had your sanction. If thy blessed spirit is yet hovering over the frail clay, give some token of pardon to a distracted son.' He knelt and bowed his head upon the corpse; when Blocks heard a light noiseless step enter the room, and a voice exclaimed, 'C'est vrai!—my enemy is here before me.'

The officer started to his feet, and would have sprung to the other table, no doubt expecting to find his pistols, but his opponent barred the way. 'What would you now, infernal fiend?' demanded he.

'You mouth it well, monsieur,' responded the other. 'Nay, put up your sword. It was I who taught your arm the fence; and though you've been a clever pupil, you are not yet a master. There lies my ancient foe, who drove me forth upon the world, and made me what I am. Monsieur Eugène, I will tell you a secret: it was my hand that stretched him there.' And the wretch laughed.

'Monster!—villian!—murderer!' screamed Eugène, making a desperate but useless pass at his antagonist: he was instantly disarmed, and at the mercy of his enemy.

'You had better have kept your temper, Monsieur Eugène!' tauntingly exclaimed the other. 'That pass was worthy of the teacher, however, and I am proud of my instruction. But you would stab your friend—the friend who has made you a marquis—though, I forgot all titles were abolished; but, at all events, there are the estates, young man. It would sound badly at the Convention, that Monsieur Du Fay had attempted to assassinate a compatriot, and his equal in rank:—yes, the poor sergeant of chasseurs is now a colonel; and he who was spurned from the chateau for loving your sister Pauline, has now the power of life and death in his hands. That pass, however, was well made, and——'

'What is your object in seeking me here?' inquired the officer who had been styled Du Fay: 'is it to exult over your murdered victim, once your benefactor and friend? Remember, sir, I am not without influence—my services demand——'

'Tush—folly, man!' returned the other, laughing: 'you—I—the whole army are but tools—mere instruments in the hands of one whom I could name; nay, why should I fear to name him?—it is Robespierre. He needs our swords; but were they laid aside, he would be just as likely to require our heads, and roll them on the scaffold. I am here to serve you, and to save your sisters. Are you ready to sanction my union with Pauline?'

'Horrible audacity!' exclaimed Du Fay; 'what! marry the daughter, with the blood of the father still red upon your hands? Think you Pauline is so utterly lost to feeling and to honour?'—An involuntary groan, arising from exhaustion and pain, issued from poor Blocks: it was heard by the other parties. 'Hark!' exclaimed Eugène, 'the very dead protests against it;' and he returned to the side of the corpse.

'Either she is mine, or dies!' said the other determinedly; 'nor can all your boasted influence save her. The terrorists will have their way—the trenches are prepared—the general will spare no one.'

'And I remain here idly,' exclaimed Du Fay, 'whilst perhaps they perish. The general wars not against women: he will, he must listen to my entreaties—and what power can you possess superior to mine?'

Blocks heard the rustling of some paper, as the other replied, 'Here is the warrant for their execution. I am commissioned to see its performance.'

'Colonel Tiercelin!' returned Du Fay, his energies subdued, 'can you—dare you consign my sisters to a death of outrage? Think of the château—think of earlier days—think—oh God! 'tis horrible to think! for the memory floats onward like the tide, filling up the after history with deeds of blood. Yet you cannot—you dare not murder the children of your benefactor.'

'My benefactor?' uttered the person addressed. 'Twice have you taunted me with the term. Your father found me an exile, and I might have lived and died in humble obscurity (if my fiery nature would have permitted), but that he ascertained the royal blood was flowing in my veins. They may talk of legitimacy and the marriage contract!—tush! I am not less the son of a king for being born out of wedlock; nor will I ever forget, that whilst my unfortunate mother expired in a convent, her child was banished and abandoned to penury and want. Your father gave me shelter, brought me up, and educated me: we lived together—I dared to love your sister, and was driven from the only home I ever knew. The marquis had only *éclat* in view—he cared not for the bar sinister then, and——'

'Hold, Tiercelin!' said Du Fay; 'you well know, that it was not till you had outraged every moral feeling, and shown yourself capable of the vilest ingratitude, that you were sent from the château. But I cannot stay longer here; I must seek the general.'

'You do not stir from this place, Du Fay, until you have sealed the fate of Pauline,' returned the other firmly. 'Your rejection of my alliance shall be her death—no power on earth can save her; for if not mine, no created being shall enjoy the woman I have loved to madness.'

'By what authority, sir, do you oppose my departure?' demanded Du Fay, who sprang to the table, lifted up his jacket—the weapons were gone. 'Nay, then I dare you!' he exclaimed; 'I defy your sword!' and he rushed upon his merciless opponent, who received the shock as if he had been a statue of marble,

Blocks peeped out and beheld the strife. The antagonist of Du Fay was splendidly dressed, a strong muscular man, tall and stout, who hurled the young officer back into the apartment, wounded.

'I am resolved, monsieur!' exclaimed the wretch, coolly wiping and putting up his sword. 'Write to Pauline your sanction to our union—she will not disregard the request of her brother, and all may yet be well. Refuse, and she—ay, you also must die! I am here the stronger of the two—you are at my disposal—and do you suppose I would suffer a babbler to talk of what has happened?—no, no!'

'Villain!' indignantly uttered Du Fay, 'and can you think so meanly of my intellect as to suppose I do not penetrate your designs? My consent once in your hands, you, who have murdered the father, would assassinate the son, to prevent its being known. Come on, thou bastard!'—he seized a chair and aimed a blow; 'at least I will sell my life at a hazard.'

Blocks again looked out, and saw the tall officer struck heavily by the chair—his sword was immediately drawn, and in all probability Du Fay in a few minutes would have been laid by the side of his father; but Ten-thousand's finger was on the trigger of the pistol—he trembled lest he should be foiled in his aim, but, mustering all his resolution, he fired: the smoke prevented his witnessing the effect, but the cry of 'Ha, treachery!' induced him to hope that it had been sure. Firmly he grasped the other pistol, the emergency of the moment steadying all his nerves—the smoke cleared, and the officer stood with his hand to his head, apparently unharmed. Du Fay had taken advantage of the firing, and rushed through the door-way: his antagonist did not follow, but staggeringly approached the table: he removed his hand, and a stream of blood gushed down his face. Blocks sprang from his concealment,—he snapped the other pistol—it missed fire, and the sword of the wounded man passed just above his shoulder; but the force of the thrust overpowered the Colossus,—his eye became dim, his brain reeled, and he fell prostrate on the young midshipman, forcing him beneath his weight to the ground.

Expecting immediate death, and unable to extricate himself, Ten-thousand felt the giant hand of the colonel on his throat: the compression was like a vice—strangulation proceeded—life was fast fading, when the hold suddenly relaxed, a convulsive tremour shook his foe, the body sprang from the ground and then rolled over, leaving the youth at liberty. It was several minutes, however, before Blocks could take advantage of his release: when he did, he found the strong man a corpse. His first impulse was to escape; but remembering the warrant of execution, he felt the pockets of the enemy, possessed himself of every paper, and then hastened to quit the house,—but he found the door secured, and all egress that way prevented. Whilst debating in his mind what course to pursue, he heard the noise of many voices advancing, singing and shouting, and at intervals the firing of musketry. A strong iron bar upon a central pivot was affixed to the door, and this Ten-thousand succeeded in throwing across,—he also closed the bolts, and had scarcely finished, when the muzzle of a musket was inserted in the key-hole and discharged. The lock was shattered, but it did not give way; a second and a third were fired, but still the door remained unmoved, and the plunderers, after uttering a few 'sacrés,' proceeded onward in their career. A large hole, however, had been perforated, through which Blocks could see into the street. The noise died away, and silence again resumed her absolute dominion—but the youth hesitated to depart; the bars and bolts had resisted the attack, and where could he be more safe? besides, he trusted to Du Fay's return, whom he determined to acquaint with his real situation, and to crave his protection. The wound in his arm was extremely troublesome, and hunger began to prey upon his stomach: he sought for food, and he found it;—to be sure, it was nothing but brown bread and hard cheese,—still, it was dainty fare to the half-starved young man, who ate with appetite, and a flask of brandy recruited his spirits. Having finished his meal, he laid himself in a corner near the door, and was soon in a profound sleep, from which he was awoke by the sounds of someone trying to get in. The daylight was gone, the shades of evening had closed over, but, softly creeping to the perforation, Ten-thousand was able to distinguish Monsieur du Fay: watching a few moments to ascertain, and finding he was alone, the youth drew the bolts and unbarred the door.

'Who is there?' exclaimed the officer, hesitating to enter: 'are the inhabitants returned? Speak, who's within?'

'The friend who rendered you such signal service to-day,' answered our hero. 'You have nothing now to apprehend.'

'And Colonel Tiercelin?' said the other, as Ten-thousand emerged from the gloom and presented himself to view.

'—Is dead!' responded Blocks.

'And you?' said the officer.

'Am the individual who fired,' returned the midshipman.

Du Fay entered, and soon convinced himself of the fact. His gratitude to the young man was expressed in warm acknowledgments as he wept over the body of his murdered parent. A lingering beam of light still forced its way into the apartment, and threw a shadowy mistiness over every object. On the table was extended the corpse of the Marquis du Fay; and on the floor lay the body of his murderer: a channel of blood running for nearly two feet away from his head, and then extending into a circular pool, formed a dark coagulated mass that made the spectator shudder.

'My brave young friend,' exclaimed Du Fay, 'you have acted nobly—may I trespass still further on your aid? My sisters——'

'Are they safe, monsieur?' eagerly inquired Blocks.

'Thank heaven, they are,' returned the marquis.

'And released?' said Blocks.

'Yes, and released,' answered Du Fay; 'but they insist on returning hither to perform the last rites to our lamented parent. Have you been disturbed during my absence?—do you think that we can barricade so as to prevent intrusion?'

'You must be the best judge of probabilities from without, monsieur,' returned Blocks. 'The bolts and bar have resisted violent shocks to-day, and we might hold out—but let us have fire-arms. Mais, monsieur, the body of the colonel?'

'We must remove it,' rejoined the other.

Ten-thousand remembered the closet, and thither they dragged the corpse from observation. 'And now,' continued the marquis, 'I hasten to the prison.'

'For what purpose?' demanded Blocks.

'To fetch my sisters,' returned Du Fay. 'The general granted my requests for their release, but I durst not bring them through an infuriated rabble—even our own men would have massacred them, and I should have been expected to look on with satisfaction.'

'This is horrible!' said Blocks; 'can human nature be so utterly depraved? I now can well believe the atrocities which almost stunned the intellect to read—the bloody Robespierre, the sanguinary Danton. Men must have tigers' hearts within their breasts when the weak and defenceless become their prey! And you, monsieur—you, too, have joined them!'

'How's that?' sharply exclaimed the other; 'you of the *canaille*, who are here for plunder, dare to arraign the proceedings of authority!'

'The proceedings of murderers and assassins,' returned Blocks, 'men who usurp the powers of authority by setting the principles and attributes of the laws at utter defiance. But we will not enter upon that now. I am not of the *canaille*, nor am I a mercenary plunderer.'

'What are you then?' demanded Du Fay. 'In these times it is necessary a man should know his compatriots.'

'True, monsieur,' returned Blocks, whose spirit seemed to soar beyond his own comprehension; 'you have a specimen of your knowledge in yonder closet. But I scorn deceit; I am an officer—an English naval officer, forced hither by circumstances that appear almost miraculous. I have done you some service to-day, and crave your protection in return.'

'This is indeed strange!' returned Du Fay; 'and how am I to be convinced of this, or that you really are the individual who fired at Tiercelin?'

'I have the death-warrant for your sisters in my possession,' quietly returned Blocks.

'You have reminded me,' exclaimed the marquis; 'I am now convinced. But your knowledge of the languarge.'

'— Is the effect of education and practice,' answered Ten-thousand. 'You may safely trust *me*, monsieur; but what bond have I that you will not at least surrender me as a prisoner?'

'My word of honour, young man,' returned Du Fay, 'the parole of the last scion of one of the most ancient houses in the kingdom. Oh God! that it should have ever suffered this deep humiliation! I go, then,—do you await my return.—the kennels are running blood—night may relax the slaughter.'

He departed, and nearly two hours elapsed before the preconcerted signal was heard announcing his return. Blocks unbarred the door, and the young marquis and his sisters entered. A light was procured, and they repaired to the scene of the conflict, to 'sorrow o'er the dead.'

CHAPTER VII.

'The ocean hath a tinge of blood—a sound of woe the air;
Death swims his pale steed through the flood, and casts around despair;
The land is stain'd with slaughter—there is no hand to save,—
The living victims shrieking stand beside their hollow grave.'

THE young Englishman was introduced to the ladies; and pleasing to his heart were the acknowledgments of these beautiful women, whose minds were bent on getting to the land of freedom—England! The wound in Blocks's arm was kindly attended to by them, and arrangements were made that he should remain with them in the quality of domestic, to prevent suspicion. Heavily passed that night; and on the following morning the whole removed to another part of the town. The body of the late marquis was consigned to the priests, and interred;—the corpse of Tiercelin had been thrown into a well. A suitable dress was procured for our hero, who sallied forth to judge of his chances of escape, and to see whether the ladies might cherish any hope of quitting the country.

Horrible were the spectacles that met his sight as he traversed the streets;—the young and the aged, male and female, indiscriminately butchered; groans and shrieks, and rattling peals of musketry, were heard in all directions: indeed, it was highly dangerous to appear abroad, for the intoxicated soldiery seemed reckless of hitting friend or foe. Numbers had fled for shelter to the churches; but the disciples of the high priest of Reason had no reverence for things holy or sacred, and the work of carnage went on even before the altar, which was stained with human sacrifice. In one of the chapels, a priest, more bold than his brethren, seized the eucharist and held it up before the brutal murderers for the purpose of endeavouring to prevent the sanguinary violence that deluged the temple of the Deity with blood:—the wolves of Fouché and d'Herbois had their victims before them in one flock; 'Les Noyades! les Noyades!' was the shout, and the priest bearing the symbol of redemption, together with men, women, and children, were dragged towards the harbour; here they were bound by cords, put into boats that had been staved, and launched upon the waters, at once to find a death and grave.

Blocks stood upon the platform,—the cutter was still lying alongside it, but he did not fear recognition, so completely was he disguised. There he beheld the guilty and the innocent involved in one common ruin. Dreadful were the

cries of the helpless wretches, as the sinking boats gradually immersed them deeper and deeper; whilst others, dauntlessly braving their inevitable fate, reviled their executioners, or sang songs of triumph: some tried to precipitate their end by overturning the frail vessel, whilst others sat in mute despair. Parents gazed on their shrieking children—husbands looked for the last time upon their wives: they could not embrace,—and as they descended lower and lower in the yielding element, so did shrieks, shouts, imprecations, prayers, and the howlings of despair, come mingling fearfully upon the ear. The day was beautifully fine and warm,—the heavens were one field of ethereal blue, clear and bright,—the ocean was calm and passionless,—all nature seemed to be holding a festival in honour of the Creator, whilst man—ruthless man—was destroying the image of the Supreme, and converting even the very ingenuity of the mind to a means of torture to his fellow-creatures.

And there stood the priest—his sacerdotal vestments torn, and smeared with crimson stains that blackened as they dried; his shaven crown was uncovered, his arms were unbound, and there he stood clasping the consecrated wafer to his breast, his eyes raised in adoration, and whilst looking to possess a martyr's throne, he overcame the terrors of the dark valley, through which he must pass to gain it. Blocks watched him narrowly, but not a muscle of his countenance manifested the slightest fear—he stood unmoved amidst the awful scene, and when the catastrophe arrived, he retained his position and his firmness to the last;—his shaven crown appeared buoyant a moment or two upon the surface, even animal instinct was mastered, and he disappeared without a struggle.

Down—down went the boats; then came the death-throes and the strivings to catch at life;—even after they had sunk from sight, for several minutes, the commotion of the water told of the fearful contest that was still going on below,—the resistance to the king of terrors, the tenacity of existence.—Yet they did not all sink,—a few continued to float; and one powerful man not only succeeded in bursting his own bonds, but speedily released his suffering companions. A low murmur passed amongst them; they were near the platform, and by paddling with their hands they approached the steps. Several soldiers ran down to launch them off again; but three gallantly effected a landing, and each grappling with a foe, forced him with them into the boat. The others instantly shoved out into the space; and then was witnessed a scene as surprising as it was strange. The condemned firmly held the captives by the throat, and the efforts of the latter to escape did but hasten on their own destruction. The former bound their prisoners to themselves, and themselves to the coffin, that was slowly yielding to the pressure of the increased burthen. Hundreds stood upon the quays and beheld this daring act, whilst, true to their national characteristic, they hailed the deed by reiterated shouts. They might have rescued their countrymen—but then they would have spoiled an heroic tragedy; and what was the value of two or three comrades, compared with the gratification afforded by so novel a spectacle? The doomed ones returned the shouts of the spectators, as they descended; and even when their heads had become immersed, their hands were seen waving to the last. Loud bursts of applause announced the crisis, and the perpetrators returned to the habitations to search for other victims to republican vengeance.

Blocks lingered a short time on the spot. The revolting exhibition he had beheld seemed to impart a hardened ferocity to his nature: it stirred up the most deadly passion of the human mind—revenge. The French were no longer considered as the honourable enemies of his country; he looked upon them as fiends waging war against the whole human race. He followed the receding tide of cold-blooded murderers till they haulted before the town-hall. Here the space in front was filled with emigrants and the suspected, who were bound together in double files of fifties, amounting in all to upwards of five hundred. The grey hairs of eighty, and the flaxen locks of childhood—youth and manhood, beauty and deformity—the high-born maiden in rich attire, and the lowly daughter of poverty, were mingled in promiscuous degradation, but united by one common fate.

The principal portion of the French officers seemed to hold aloof from the sanguinary scenes, as if they feared resistance to the commands which humility dictated but policy withheld; yet there were some particularly active in inciting the soldiers to cruelty, and none more so than the *chef de bataillon* Davoust. In the work of plunder and of murder he was everywhere; and he now headed the artillery as they took the lead of the unfortunates, who were dragged—and many were literally so—after them. They commenced their march; and then arose wailings and lamentations, which the shouts of the soldiers and the incessant rolling of the drums vainly endeavoured to stifle. There is something so peculiarly affecting in the sound of the human voice when labouring under affliction, that it may be readily distinguished from all others; even the neigh of a wounded horse is very different from that joyous expression of pleasure which he sends forth in the pride of freedom. Slowly the procession paraded through the streets; many of the windows were thronged with spectators, but there was no look of sympathy—no tear of regret, for either one or the other might have sent the individual who indulged humanity to share the fate of those he pitied. Obscene jests and coarse insults were showered on the unfortunate prisoners, and not unfrequently blows and wounds were added; whilst the words, 'Mort aux émigrés!'—'A bas les émigres!' rose hoarsely in the air, as the croakings of condemnation, strongly contrasted with the enthusiastic greeting, 'Vive la Nation!' 'Vive la République Française!'

Blocks experienced sensations such as he had never felt before; a pugnacious spirit was stirring

within him: yet he could not believe that so many individuals were doomed to execution; he trusted that it was a procession of captives to grace the triumph of the victors, and that at its close they would be suffered to return to their homes.

'Allons, camarade!' said a veteran grenadier to him; 'let us hasten to the trench, and secure a place where we can view the fête unmolested.'

Blocks made no reply, but following the steps of the guide, they ascended the ramparts (already occupied by numbers) near one of the gates, and looking over, our hero saw in the ditch two trenches dug, one close to the wall, the other against the bank, and each about five feet deep, leaving a space of about eight feet between them. 'Vive la Nation!' shouted the veteran, and the cry was instantly responded to by thousands.

Ten-thousand had no time to ask questions. Davoust, mounted on a superb charger, his plumes dancing and flaunting in the air, rode through the gateway; the heavy lumbering of the artillery, like distant thunder, was heard as it rolled over the drawbridge; next came the detachment of *canoniers*, and after them the devoted prisoners, most of them gathering courage from the certainty of the fate that awaited them: but, as in the Noyades, there were many utterly stupefied with fear; some had fainted, others had fallen; and these, separated from the rest, were thrown upon waggons, like sheep appointed for the slaughter, and brought up the rear of the captives. Behind them marched a body of troops, the drums (there were no fifes) keeping up one incessant roll. Onward (by a prepared descent) poured the tide into the ditch; the artillery halted, but the prisoners proceeded to the embankment between the two trenches.

A sickening horror came over the heart of poor Blocks as the projected massacre developed itself. He would have quitted the spot, though it might have rendered him suspected, but the thing was impossible; the sloping parapet was thronged, and he had the additional distress to find that a sudden pressure in the rear would in all probability precipitate those in front down into the ditch. He laid himself at full length, and being close to an embrasure, was fortunate enough to creep into it. Attempts were made to dislodge him; but he held firmly round the muzzle of the gun, and the events below soon drew off attention from him. Davoust and the artillery were on the right of his position; the centre of the prisoners was immediately beneath them. 'Vive la Nation!' was shouted by the troops. 'Vive la Religion!—à bas les Régicides!' returned the most undaunted of the prisoners. The heavy field-pieces were prepared at the extremity of the bank. 'Attendez, mon ami,' said the grenadier: 'the canoniers aim well.' A maddening curiosity impelled our hero's vision; a rattling discharge echoed in the ditch, and, oh God! he beheld limbs and heads, and mangled carcasses fly in all directions: some spun up into the air, others spread from right to left. The grape-shot had mowed down whole lines; many were beyond human suffering, but the principal portion, maimed and wounded, and dying, lay prostrate on the ground. A great number were wholly untouched. Then arose shrieks shrillingly piercing, commingled with the bravos of desperation. Several, released from their bondage, rushed towards their enemies, and a few scrambled up the banks, but were despatched by musketry: the muzzles of the guns were depressed, and again the grape-shot ploughed the ground, sending many an immortal spirit into the presence of the Deity, to bear witness against this deed of savage atrocity—this shedding of blood for the mere indulgence of ferocious delight. The scene grew too horrible to dwell upon; the artillery quickened in its discharges, and then the troops traversed the heaps of mangled dead, giving the *coup de grace* with the bayonet to those who still survived. The butchery was ended, the slaughter complete, and the sanguinary Davoust retraced his steps upon his prancing steed with all the pride of a conquerer who had achieved a victory, instead of the heartless ruffian who had murdered in cold blood.

On his return to the quarters of Monsieur du Fay, Ten-thousand was informed that rigid inquiries had been instituted for Colonel Tiercelin, and a reward offered for information on the subject; but, in the then state of the town, there was but little chance of any discovery taking place, so that but trifling apprehensions were excited in the minds of our hero and his friends, from whom Blocks learned that there could be no doubt of the fact, that their dead enemy was indeed and in truth the son of Louis the Fifteenth, by a beautiful young female, who had been seized in the garden of the Tuilleries when but little more than nine years of age, and kept in that infamous receptacle, erected by Madame de Pompadour at Versailles, called the Parc aux Cerfs, till she had passed her twelfth year, when she was given up to that monarch. She was subsequently confined in the Bastile, but was released from that prison on condition of entering a convent, and never claiming her son, who was consigned to penury and want. The old Marquis du Fay, whose estates lay in the south of France, had ascertained the facts, and taken the child under his protection. He became one of the most expert swordsmen of the day, and instructed the children of the marquis in athletic exercises; but his excesses and debauchery drew down upon him the anger of his patron, and subsequently, when he professed attachment and offered outrage to Mademoiselle Pauline, he was expelled the château, and entered the army as a sergeant of volunteers. He was sent to join the troops under General Custine, who advanced him to the rank of lieutenant; but he returned to Paris during the violence of the revolution, and was mainly instrumental in bringing to execution the general who had thus promoted him. A Terrorist in every sense of the word, Tiercelin was sent to the Army of the North, where his rise was rapid, in consequence of the part he took under the monster Fouché in destroying the Lyonese.

The Marquis du Fay, as has been already related, fled from his country, and took shelter with his daughters in Flanders, intending to pass over into England; but he had delayed embarking till it was too late,—Lord Moira evacuated the place, and Tiercelin had entered with his corps. Here, amongst the émigrés, he ascertained was the woman he had professed to admire,—for love in the breast of such a being was entirely out of the question. He sought the family out, and being upbraided and resisted by the venerable father, he stabbed him repeatedly till life was utterly extinct. Still he did not dare openly to seize the sisters, for even his authority could not have saved them from the fury of the troops. Compelled, however, to leave them for the purpose of attending to his duties, he placed a creature of his own in charge of the house, and after uttering the most horrible threats if any attempts were made to evade him, he proceeded to obtain the document which he imagined would awe Pauline into obedience to his will. The brigade to which Monsieur du Fay belonged occupied a more central position, being before that place so noted as the spot where my uncle Toby received his wound, viz., Dendermond; but having been apprised that the French troops had occupied Ostend, and knowing that it had been the retreat of his family, he communicated with the commander-in-chief, Pichegru, who, though fighting under the Republican banners, still had a lingering regard for the Royalists. His application was successful, and he was despatched with letters to General Moreau, who was employed upon the coast. Du Fay arrived, and after some delay and difficulty he discovered the retreat of the father and sisters. Without losing a moment, he hastened to Moreau, who, though however humanity might touch his heart, had yet had too dreadful a warning in the fate of his own parent to openly afford protection to those condemned; still he promised his secret influence, and Du Fay hastened to the residence of his family, to find his father murdered, and his sisters, deserted by all the world, lamenting over the bleeding body! The sergeant who had been left in charge was touched with pity, and when the brother requested his services to convey a letter to Moreau, the man unhesitatingly complied; but at a short distance he was met by Tiercelin, who demanded the cause of his quitting his post. The man, alarmed at the consequences of his benevolence, endeavoured to escape, but was instantly pursued. The sergeant was rescued by a party of his comrades, to whom he told his tale. The colonel was foiled; whilst the soldiers immediately returned and dragged away the ladies to prison. The sergeant, however, did not accompany them, and what became of him was never clearly ascertained. On escaping from Tiercelin, after the latter had been wounded by Blocks, Du Fay hastened to Moreau; and the generous man, feeling for the sorrows of his young friend, no longer withheld open interference. He ordered the release of the ladies, and immediately departed to occupy Bruges and reduce Ghent. Then it was that Davoust, left in command, consummated the detestable deed already related.

Our hero found nothing to complain of in the manner in which he was treated by his protector, for though, in the presence of others, a due distance was preserved to avoid suspicion, yet, by themselves, every kind attention was lavished upon him. Necessarily confined much to the house, his time would have hung heavy, but for his fondness for the arts. His water-coloured drawings were greatly admired; and young Du Fay, whose education had been much neglected, availed himself of many hours' instruction in planning upon mathematical principles. At this time, though the French army had officers and men whose bravery might be deemed romantically enthusiastic, yet there was but little of scientific knowledge,—the conquests depending more upon rapid movements and the ardour of the soldiers than the skill or tactics of their leaders.

The sisters of Du Fay had become more reconciled to their situation and the new order of things, and they acceded to the earnest request of their brother, that as soon as travelling was safe, they would return to the family estate. Pauline was a remarkably fine woman, full of bold conceptions and brilliant wit; in short, she was just the creation to fascinate the daring, intrepid hero who wished to see a counterpart of himself in the lady of his love. Adèle was all gentleness and feminine delicacy, more suited to the quiet of life than the bustle and carnage of warfare. The former gloried in a gallant deed, though cruelty was the result, whilst the latter shrunk from the perpetrators of acts that made her soul shudder. The consequences were obvious: Pauline became the worshipped of the Terrorists, Adèle was soon beloved for her amiable qualities, and in the course of a few weeks Du Fay was wholly relieved of his charge, Pauline was married to a general of brigade, and Adèle was united to a civilian of high rank; and thus the colonel could prosecute his military ardour undisturbed.

Notwithstanding his perfect knowledge of the French language, circumstances would frequently occur that nearly betrayed the young midshipman to his enemies, and by order of the Convention every Englishman was to suffer death. Blocks, however, was happily blessed with considerable presence of mind, that brought him off victorious in many a season of peril. He had made some clever drawings of the fortifications of Ghent, to which place they had removed; and whilst on one occasion imparting instruction to his kind protector, an officer unexpectedly entered, and overlooked their operations for some time unseen.

'You improve famously, Du Fay,' at length uttered the intruder, to the great embarrassment of the others; 'but who is your youthful tutor? Par Jove! but there is talent, and great talent too, in these sketches,' taking up the drawings and examining them. 'This is monopoly, Du Fay, your young friend ought to be better known. These are the times for merit to o'ertop the prejudices of birth.—I beg pardon though, mon

ami,—I meant no offence by the allusion. Talent and exalted birth are seldom found in unison with each other, where they are conjoined, as in Colonel du Fay ;' and he bowed.

'Make no apologies, St. Cyr,' returned the other, 'and least of all to me. As you say, these sketches are pretty, and——'

'Pretty ! Du Fay ! that is but a mincing sort of praise,' exclaimed St. Cyr, rapidly casting his eye over the plans and views which the open portfolio exposed. 'There is a beauty, a genius, a correctness about them, that even Berthier himself might be proud to acknowledge. At all events, he shall do justice to the artist.—May I,' said he, addressing our hero in the most insinuating manner, and holding one of his best drawings,—'May I presume to beg this favour, or——' he hesitated. 'I am really in an awkward predicament.'

'The sketch is wholly at your service, monsieur,' answered our hero, perfectly collected, notwithstanding the dilemma in which he was placed. 'Mais, I have one favour to beg.'

'Name it, my friend,' exclaimed St. Cyr. 'If it is for interest or for influence, mine is weak and small ; but you possess that which in the present day is superior to either. When Berthier sees this drawing, your presence will be required at head-quarters : and——' observing the bandage on his arm, 'you have seen service too !'

'Monsieur merits my lasting gratitude,' returned our hero, bowing ; 'but I am destined for the marine, and should be now ploughing the ocean, had not circumstances beyond my control conducted me hither.'

'Fortune has directed your path, young man,' observed St. Cyr. 'The sea cannot offer such advantages as are now before you. Do you want an evidence? there is one before you. I started in life a painter, and traversed the luxuriant clime of Italy to catch inspiration for my pencil. Footsore and hungry, and weary, I still revelled in the rich and the sublime of Nature's proudest works ; but my heart longed for other enjoyments. Quiet and repose were my *chefs-d'œuvre;* but whilst transferring them to the canvas, my spirit loved the roar of the mountain cataract, or the raging tempest that uprooted forests : yet I could not paint such scenes. I might have remained a pauvre diable, but that which stirred my nature prompted me to a strife of arms. Five years ago I carried the firelock as a volunteer ; I am now a general of brigade ; and thirty years have not yet passed away since I was an infant in my mother's arms. What would you more?'

'Monsieur owns that the arts did not avail him, then?' said Blocks, smiling, as he seized with avidity any plea or excuse. 'I, who am so humble an aspirant, cannot therefore hope for promotion for the little talent Heaven has been pleased to impart.'

'Young man, leave subtlety to courts—it does not suit the camp,' responded St. Cyr. 'But come, you shall judge for yourself. Accompany me to my quarters ; I have yet some specimens by me. I love to look at them, Du Fay ; they remind me of past times ;' and the general sighed.

To have refused acquiescence to his request would have been downright folly ; and yet both Blocks and the colonel felt the unpleasantness of deception. Another thought, which had never presented itself before, now swiftly passed across Du Fay's mind. The plans, the drawings, the secrecy—all stood in fearful array as proofs that the young Englishman might be condemned as a spy ; and he well knew there were many in the army who would have executed summary vengeance without trial, that they might be enabled to throw the odium of such a pursuit on the British officers, whilst his enemies would exultingly implicate himself in the charge : yet he had gone too far to recede. Suddenly, and to his credit be it spoken, he determined not to abandon one who had rendered him such signal service. Rising, therefore, they issued to the street, just as an English officer was being carried by who had been brought in severely wounded. Ten-thousand's heart glowed at the sight of the regimentals ; humanity overcame discretion, and he stopped to chide the men for not being more gentle in their motions.

'Whoever you are, exclaimed the officer languidly, 'for the love of Heaven give me a little water : these fellows have almost jolted me to death.'

'Parlez Français, monsieur,' said one of the bearers, 'and take everything cool and easy.'

'Parley the devil,' answered the choleric Englishmen, 'officers franchaise ! — D—— the lingo ! I shall make nothing of it, and be choked with thirst.'

'Vous avez soif, monsieur?' exclaimed Ten-thousand, a tear starting to his eye, whilst a smile lingered on his cheek.

'Oh, ay, I'll have swipes, or water, or a little brandy, or anything that's moistening,' returned the other.

'Monsieur le général, the prisoner asks for drink,' said Blocks ; 'it is a small request.'

Du Fay trembled as he saw the keen and piercing eye of St. Cyr fixed upon the young midshipman. He who had been accustomed to read Nature in all her works, could not be insensible to her operations on the human heart ; but he took no present notice.

'Convey the prisoner to comfortable quarters,' said St. Cyr to the men ; and then turning to our hero, added, 'You must visit him, young sir, and take his parole.'

Blocks bowed, and they pursued their way in silence : but just as they were passing a broad space near the citadel, a tall muscular man, in the habit of a German student, rushed from behind, and poising a long shining blade in the air, was about to drive it mortally home in St. Cyr's neck ; but Blocks, who had fallen somewhat in the rear, perceived his intent, and ran with full force against the general, and impelled him forward, so that he escaped the assassin's knife. Du Fay's sword was instantly unsheathed, and passed through the body of the infatuated man ; and when St. Cyr turned round to resent the supposed indignity that had been offered to him, he saw the wretched stu-

dent writhing on the weapon of his friend, the knife still firmly grasped for vengeance. Suddenly retreating, the German disengaged himself from the sword, and made another attack upon the general; but a picket-guard coming up at the time, the assassin was seized and disarmed. The officers continued their walk, leaving the expiring student in the hands of his enemies.

St. Cyr quietly but gratefully complimented our hero upon his achievement; but further progress was prevented by an aide-de-camp riding up with orders from General Pichegru for the army immediately to advance. 'You must therefore, par conséquence, defer your visit, my young friend. Nevertheless, consider me devoted to the promotion of your welfare. Adieu, Du Fay; get your regiment under arms without loss of time. Your orders shall be sent you.' And bowing, he joined the aide-de-camp.

'I have had a narrow escape,' said Blocks; 'and, Monsieur du Fay, you must run no further hazard on my account. General St. Cyr is generous and humane; I will surrender myself. It is true, I did hope to get off from the coast, or, by escaping, to join the rear of the British forces; but every day adds to the risk you run for affording shelter to an enemy. I know the decree of the Convention; and, believe me, Robespierre——'

'Do you not know,' uttered Du Fay rapidly;—'have you not heard—has no one informed you—'

'Of what?' demanded our hero. 'I have shut myself up so close of late, that I have heard nothing.'

'You named Robespierre,' returned Du Fay; 'are you not aware that he has suffered for his crimes beneath the axe of the guillotine?'

'No!' replied Ten-thousand; 'can it be possible?— May all blood-thirsty revolutionists perish as he has done!'

'Yes; Robespierre, Hériot, and Couthon were decapitated on the same day, and the Reign of Terror is at an end,' said Du Fay; 'but for the present, you must advance with the army—unless, indeed, you will return and visit Adèle.'

'I will not state my intentions even to you, my generous friend,' uttered Ten-thousand. 'You must make the best excuse you can for my disappearance;—you know,' and he smiled, 'I am destined for the marine.'

It was a spirit-stirring spectacle to witness the movements of the army as regiment after regiment quitted the town; and Blocks, as he looked on, could not but be struck with the martial appearance of the troops, who, from the chief to the ranks, had been called into existence like the creation of a day. There rode the terrible Davoust and the plunderer Laison, decked in there gorgeous military trappings—there also were Lefebvre and Mortier—all destined to figure in future history. The general of Du Fay's brigade was Gouvion St. Cyr, whom we have already mentioned, and, compared with the revolutionary cut-throats, an angel of light amongst demons.

Blocks determined at all hazards to make a push the earliest opportunity. The Duke of York, partially deserted by the Allies, had no alternative but to retreat; and the inhabitants of Belgium, left to the mercy of the conquerors, was exasperated to the extreme of hate against the English. In fact, the revolutionary mania was spreading through the Netherlands; and the manner in which the British army was supplied plainly evinced the disposition of the inhabitants. It is no part of our tale to enumerate the battles that were fought and the defeats suffered by our countrymen; let it suffice that our hero witnessed the advance of the French army and the retreat of the English without being able to join his friends, till at length grown thoroughly desperate, he equipped himself in the dress of a peasant, and under cover of the night, succeeded in getting between the two armies on the banks of the river Wall, some of the British troops then lying at Gorcum, whom he hoped to join.

But winter—a hard, rigorous winter—had set in, and Blocks knew but little of the feeling that pervaded nearly all classes of society;—he was not aware that emissaries had been sent to Pichegru to hasten his approach by promises of co-operation, and that the party of the Stadtholder was hourly on the decline. His life was constantly exposed, and neither as Englishman nor Frenchman was he at any time safe. He underwent the most severe privations, frequently passing the nights, exposed to the severity of the weather, in sheds or in the open air, and in more instances than one stripping the dead bodies of his countrymen of the few clothes that the plunderers had left, to cover over him as he lay upon the frost-bound earth. He was nearly starved; for when trying to obtain food at the farmhouses, he was driven away not unfrequently by blows;—yet his health remained good—whilst he frequently beheld the melancholy spectacle of many of his sick and wounded countrymen lying on the banks of the dykes to perish. They had been left to the care of the inhabitants; but as soon as the army retreated, the unhappy creatures, destitute of everything, were carried forth from the houses, and left to be frozen to death by the inclement season of the year. So familiar had become Blocks to such scenes, that once or twice he made a sort of entrenchment with dead bodies to keep the cold night winds from piercing him. For upwards of a fortnight did his wanderings continue, till at length, almost famished, he reached Gorcum, and found—not the British troops, for they were gone, but a hearty hatred to the English, and an imbecile terror of the French. He offered his services to the master of a schuyt, but the river was frozen, and they were not required: nevertheless, he obtained permission to remain on board; though he could get no food, except a handful or two of horse-beans occasionally, and now and then a piece of coarse, hard bread. In the course of a few days, the advance of the French army appeared in sight; and he determined, as it would be nearer to the sea, to proceed to Dort. This he set out to accomplish by walking over the ice; and having passed one night in a deserted vessel that was frozen up,

the following morning he pursued his way, and succeeded in making good his entrance soon after noon. But no one would administer to his necessities; he had tasted nothing for many hours, except ice to allay his thirst—and his appeals in English, French, or Dutch, were disregarded.

At length, after traversing several of the streets, he wandered to one of the jetties that run into the Maese, forming a sort of quay or wharf for the landing of passengers and goods; and here he hoped amongst the schippers of the schuyts to obtain a little food, however coarse. Upon the jetty stood a regular double-tiled twenty-breek'd forty-degree-above-proof old Dutchman, who was evidently a man of some authority, by the massive gold chain that was suspended round his neck, and, hanging down before, was looped up to the buttons of his waistcoat. His features bore the semblance of mildness and benevolence; and there was a gravity almost approaching to distress in their expression, which evinced much anxiety and studiousness. To him our hero addressed himself in his best Dutch, and for nearly twenty minutes went on undisturbed, and, as he thought, flourishingly, in detailing his sorrows and imploring assistance. The patient son of long pipes and mud dykes seemed to listen with the most earnest attention to the youth's harangue, and at the conclusion, removing a tobacco-funnel—almost as long as the flue of a steam engine—from his mouth, he ejaculated with the most perfect self-composure, 'Yaw, mynheer; I no ferstand de Anglaish!'

'The devil!' vociferated the mortified young Englishman, as he swung his arm in agony, and stamped impatiently with his foot.

'Der duyvil! responded the Dutchman, replacing his smoking laboratory, and puffing away with redoubled energy to make up for lost time.

'And so,' continued Blocks, in his native tongue, 'I have been telling all my difficulties, as I supposed, in good Dutch, and am met with the humiliating declaration, "I don't understand English!" This is abominably provoking!'

'Yaw, mynheer!' replied the patient burgomaster, with the most profound gravity; 'I no ferstand de Anglaish.'

'The devil!' exclaimed the young Englishman, again looking out upon the dreary prospect, and then pulling his cap over his eyes to conceal his chagrin.

'Der duyvil!' puffed the Dutchman, sending forth a long and dense cloud of smoke with all his energy, as if ejecting the foul fiend whose name he had used from his expansive lungs.

'What am I do?' said our hero, in a tone of inquiry, and labouring under considerable painful excitement. 'I may as well put a loaded pistol to my head as fall again into their hands, for death is certain.'

'Yaw, mynheer!' interjaculated the burgomaster, as he replenished the huge bowl of his pipe with canaster.

'I did hope,' continued the young Englishman, 'that here, amongst the better classes, I should have experienced something like humanity, and, as an unfortunate ally, might have been assisted to reach some of the British cruisers. I am perishing with cold and hunger!—everything seems to conspire against me—no one commiserates my situation;—oh God! have mercy; this is indeed dreadful! Yet, surely, all hearts cannot be alike hardened against me! There must be one amongst so many——'

'Yaw, mynheer!' replied a soft, sweet voice behind him; and our hero, turning round, beheld a female figure in a huge capote, that entirely screened both person and features from observation; and at a short distance from her stood an official completely armed.

When first the young midshipman addressed the burgomaster, he had particularly noticed they were alone; but becoming more and more absorbed in the development of his narrative, he had not perceived that others had joined the party, and on his first hearing the voice, it came so thrillingly upon his sense, that it prompted the old aspiration, though in an undertone—'The devil! it is all up with me!'

'Der duyvil!' fired the Dutchman, addressing the female somewhat impatiently; 'what do you do here?'

'I seek my father,' replied she, in tones so musical and plaintive that they harmonised with delight on the young man's ears. 'The council awaits his presence—yonder is their messenger. An officer has arrived from the advancing enemy ——But hasten, my father; they threaten to storm the town if it is not surrendered; and where should we find shelter then?'

'Der duyvil!' exclaimed the burgomaster again somewhat harshly, though he looked kindly upon his child; 'what should women know of these matters?'

'The devil!' responded the Englishman; 'though it appears I cannot speak the language, yet, by Jove! I can understand enough to know that my doom is sealed unless some one will take compassion on me.'

'Hans!' cried the burgomaster, and the official immediately put himself upon the advance in slow motion; 'Hans, what intelligence do you bring?'

'The council waits,' replied the man, as he drew himself up before his superior; 'the keys of the gates are ringing on their fingers' ends. There are many there ready to receive the French with open arms; gold *will* corrupt the heart.'

'Yaw, weel, I know it has been determined on,' returned the burgomaster; 'therefore they can have no need for my advice or my opinion. I will not go!'

'This is no time to flinch from duty,' urged the other, firmly; 'but they know Herr Vonestracht loves his country and will not give consent to let in these maurading thieves amongst us. They also know Herr Vonestracht is rich, and they wish to dig a pit for his feet, in the hope that some of his wealth will fall to their share. Choose your path.'

The person addressed remained for several minutes apparently in earnest deliberation with himself as to the future line of conduct he should pursue. He looked mournfully upon his daugh-

ter, and then with a long-drawn sigh he uttered, 'Hans, I *will* attend the council. Our neighbours think me rich—alas! it is not so; though, thanks be to Providence, I am not wholly destitute. Those who covet my authority are welcome to it; but the fools do not see that in submitting to the republican, they must also make room for his followers. What is the voice of one man amongst so many? Alas! Hans, I fear there is no alternative—our ancient mode of administering the laws must now yield to French prefects and their avaricious satellites—our seats of justice will be filled by the extortioner and his subordinate leeches, and our sacred institutions will become a jest and a mockery on their tongues.'

'And yet we have the full and perfect means of resistance,' returned Hans, reproachfully. 'There are six hundred pieces of cannon.'

'Twelve thousand muskets,' chimed in the burgomaster.

'And our stores are filled with ammunition,' added Hans: 'there wants but the same hearts we had two years ago, to drive these invaders from before our walls. The wretches who have murdered their king will have but little mercy upon meaner folk.'

'I know it all, good Hans,' returned the burgomaster, 'yet am unable to resist. Did it depend upon me, I would rouse the sluggards to a sense of shame. Yet, how idly do I talk!—even the elements conspire against us, and the artillery may cross the ice.'

'It is no more an auxiliary now than it has often been before,' rejoined the official, 'and our shot would mow them down before they could approach. There is cowardice and treachery in such base surrender.'

'Alas! Hans, it is a love of change,' remarked the superior. 'Amsterdam and Rotterdam, even the Hague, have sent envoys to invite the wolves amongst their flocks — the poor Stadtholder is deserted—and men of sanguinary temperament hope by imitating the revolution in France to raise themselves to eminence. Pshaw!—they are blind—the French will grasp at all—they will mock the servile imitators, and hurl them to oblivion to seize upon the honours and immunities for themselves. The populace may cut the throats of the wealthy here and elsewhere, for the sake of plunder; and the French will do the same office upon the murderers, and share the ill-gotten spoil: nay, they will encourage the first, that they may use a show of justice in perpetrating the last. Alas, alas, for my country!'

'And the maiden?' said Hans, looking affectionately towards the female. 'Oh, my honoured master, my heart is in agony at the dread of what your enemies will do.'

'Peace! good Hans,' returned the burgomaster, laying his hand upon his heart. 'All is tranquil here: I have discharged my duty—erringly, mayhap, but honestly—to God and my country. The faith for which Van Wouters shed his blood, beneath the lime-tree, at the Kleveniers Doel, is also mine; the honour for which so many patriots have died is engrafted on my heart. I will yield neither.—Peril, proscription, condemnation may come,—they may degrade, but it is only my own acts that can disgrace me.'

'But your daughter?' repeated the official; 'they will visit the contumacy of the father upon the child.'

'She has my direction, Hans,' replied the burgomaster, almost overcome with the agitation of his parental feelings. 'Yet we must bend to the tempest, unless we wish to be rooted up. Tell the council I obey their summons.—And, here, good Hans, thou hast been a faithful servant,'—the old man's voice quivered with emotion—'here is a token of kind remembrance, Hans: let us hope for better times.' The man took the proffered donation, and turned to communicate his errand. 'And now, Eugenia,' said the father, as he addressed his daughter, solemnly but affectionately,—'And now, Eugenia, may the God of our ancestors preserve us through this heavy trial! Hasten home, my child, and see that everything is secure—you understand my meaning.'

'But the young Englishman, father,' said she, 'what is to become of him?—you will not leave him to the vengeance of his enemies?'

'What have I to do with Englishmen?' uttered the burgomaster sternly; 'he must seek his safety where best he can—I have too much need of friends myself to offer help to others.'

'This is not like my father,' remonstrated Eugenia in plaintive accents; 'these invaders will have my bitter hatred if they can change the benevolence of his heart to inhumanity.'

'Peace, girl,' said the father mournfully; 'and now come with me to your home.' He bowed to the young Englishman, took his daughter's arm within his own, and quitted the jetty.

'A most hopeful and gratifying situation I am in!' uttered the young man. 'Here I am, a runaway, scarcely a shoe to my feet or a shirt to my back, hungry and cold, without a stiver in the world to procure either lodgings or victuals.—Well, well, it is of no use giving way to despair. I'm a poor devil hard-up, and that's true; but never mind,—many a dark and cloudy morning has turned out a sunshiny day.'

He sat himself down on a piece of projecting timber, and tried to whistle 'A light heart and a thin pair of breeches;' but it would not do—either his empty stomach or the heavy mists that hung in the atmosphere 'spoilt his whistling,' and he sadly murdered the tune.

The afternoon was particularly dull and chill; there was no cheering ray of warmth, and the earth was damp and clammy with fogs—not English fogs, but cold, aguish, aqueous, Dutch fogs; in fact, it was just the sort of afternoon that makes the miserable downcast weary of his wretched existence, depressing all the faculties of the mind, relaxing all the energies of the system, and reducing the image of the Creator to the lowest degradation of despondency. The young Englishman was, like his countrymen, powerfully influenced by the weather; his spirit sank within him, and hope he had none. He thought upon his early days, and the pleasant parsonage, and the contrast with his present

condition served to depress his energies still lower. He looked upon the thoughtless children who were sporting upon the ice, and adventurously skirting the brink at a place where it was broken by the fall of some timber, so as to leave a wide space for the muddy waters ; he gazed wildly on the abyss, and fearful soul-awakening sensations crept over him. 'It would be better to die at once than to perish slowly by hunger, or be exposed to the horrors of a few weeks' lingering in a gaol.'

The darker shades of approaching evening were closing in ; the tired children were quitting their amusement, called away by parents or relatives ; the jetty was deserted,—he sat there alone, unpitied, and unnoticed,—'it was but a plunge, and all would be over.' A furrowed sternness came upon his brow, his lips were closely compressed, his teeth grated together, his hands were clutched with convulsive anguish, and his eyes were steadily fixed upon the dark waters of the Maese ; the demon was tugging at his heart-strings, and laughing with infernal delight at the prospect of a victim. At this moment a piercing shriek sounded in his ears ; he sprang upon his feet, and beheld upon the opposite quay a female frantically tearing her hair and imploring assistance. At first he could not perceive the cause of her distress, but a struggling in the water of the chasm soon explained it. A small hand was raised above the surface, an infantile face appeared for one moment, and the next instant the young Englishman, who had been gloomily meditating self-destruction, dashed fearlessly into the liquid element to save a fellow-creature from that death which he had appointed for himself. The child had disappeared, but our hero dived down after it ; alas ! the tide had carried it beneath the ice, and he rose alone. The half-frantic mother stood gazing on the scene with breathless attention—the crowd kept gathering on the quay, when Ten-thousand once more plunged, and was lost to sight. Not a whisper was heard amongst that numerous assemblage as they watched the spot where he had disappeared. A few of the more active of the townsmen descended to the margin of the ice ready to assist him on his rising, others had hastened for ropes from the schuyts, and all admired the heroic action, though ignorant who the individual was that had thus perilled his existence. The mother gazed upon the eddies of the stream ; the adventurous youth rose, shook the moisture from his hair and eyes, but—he was again alone, and a deep groan burst from almost every breast. The young man looked fearlessly around him, ascertained his exact position, and once more the waters rolled above his head and concealed him from view. The time of his disappearance seemed an age to the lookers-on,—fears began to be entertained that he had swum his last, when suddenly he once more rose at some distance from the place where he had dived : a thrilling shout rent the air—he held the child on one arm, as with the other he manfully clung to the slippery glacier. A looker-on relieved him of his burden, and placed the inanimate infant on the mother's breast. Nor did our hero stop here ; for having more than once witnessed the mode of resuscitation in cases of drowning, he accompanied the distracted parent to her residence, superintended the operations, and, after considerable exertion, had the happiness to see his efforts crowned with complete success : the child breathed—it lived, and was soon in a refreshing slumber.

Nothing could exceed the gratitude of the parent, who poured out her blessings on the young Englishman's head. He asked for food—it was plentifully set before him ; and the comforts of a good fire had never felt so delightful as at that moment. Whilst thus engaged, a female entered, muffled up, and passed into the inner apartment, but the young man knew by the dress, or rather he hoped that it might be, the burgomaster's daughter. Nor was he mistaken,—in a few minutes she returned, the tears had left their traces on her cheeks, but there was a heavenly smile upon her lovely countenance as she approached the youth, and in good English uttered, 'Stranger, you have been sought after,—I have—but it is no matter now that you are found. My father's want of generosity was but assumed—his house will shelter you. As soon as it is dark, Hans—whose infant you have so nobly saved,—will conduct you privately, or if he cannot escape from service, Marie will perform that office.'

The young Englishman had arisen from his seat when first addressed, and with eager gaze had riveted his eyes upon the blooming features of the beauteous maiden. Confused visions and doubtful recollections passed across his mind, which the language of his native home had rendered still more mysterious and puzzling : he tried to catch at something tenable to fix his wandering thoughts, but in vain,—the whole seemed to be involved in a labyrinth of which he had lost the clue.

The maiden appeared to enjoy his embarrassment, and as he remained silent, she extended her hand towards him as she said, 'Is my old playmate, then, so angry with his once little Eugenia, that he will not accept the asylum offered by her father ?'

'Fool, dolt, idiot ! that I am,' exclaimed he, immediately grasping the proffered hand and pressing it to his lips ; 'how could I be so stupid as not to recognise you ? And yet there was something in your voice this afternoon that claimed acquaintance with the treasured feelings of my heart. You have not forgotten me, then ?'

'No, Mr. Blocks,' returned Eugenia, with powerful emphasis, but was instantly stopped by the young man.

'Nay, call me as you were used to do,' said he, imploringly ; 'I cannot bear that Mister—it is so cold and formal.'

'Well, then, Ten-thousand,' continued she, 'I have not forgotten you, as you have now had ample proofs : our sex do not so soon erase from memory those whom they have once esteemed.'

'Do not reproach me, Eugenia,' remonstrated

our hero imploringly. 'I have suffered so much since we last parted, that it is a wonder I have retained my reason. Yet I have never ceased to think of you, Eugenia—certainly not as I now behold you, rising to the perfection of womanly beauty, but as my playmate, my little sweetheart in those days of peace, and joy, and happiness, when not a care ruffled the smooth stream of life. Oh! Eugenia, those were delightful moments!' and the moisture sprang to the eyes of both.

There was a pause of a minute, as each looked affectionately in the other's face, animated by recollections of past enjoyments.

'I must not tarry longer,' said she, 'lest my father return from the council and find me absent. These are perilous times, as you must well know,—the French will soon be our masters; but still we can provide concealment if you desire it,—although, a few hours more, and I suppose we must be enemies.'

'I cannot escape, Eugenia,' returned Tenthousand, 'or the duty I owe to my country would urge me to do so. But there is a selfish feeling in my breast that prompts me to rejoice at the impossibility of getting away, as it will place me near you, and I shall again enjoy your loved society.'

'But not as in times that are gone,' responded the maiden. 'We shall not now wander hand-in-hand through the green fields, collecting the bouquet of wild flowers as we pass;—we shall not enjoy the clear pure air of heaven on the lofty hills, or drink from the clear stream that meanders through the valley. Dangers and difficulties, and heavy trials, surround us.'

'Yet, dearest!' interrupted the young man, soothingly but firmly, 'will not those very dangers and difficulties you apprehend operate as stronger incentives to mutual regard and united support? Believe me, afflictions are the best tests to prove the value of esteem; and though I would offer my life as a pledge of happiness to you, still I would rather convince you of my unalterable love by sharing all your perils, and protecting you from evils that may threaten your welfare.'

'We will talk of this on some future occasion,' said Eugenia; 'at present I must say farewell. Place reliance upon Hans: your gallant act has gained you many friends.'

They parted; and as our hero resumed his seat, a deep sense of his impious intentions against his own existence, whilst on the jetty, brought a burning witness to his cheeks. He had contemplated suicide at the very moment when Providence was vindicating its claim for his dependance; he thought himself a wretched outcast, without friends, without hope, and in a brief space he had found food, shelter, kindness, love. He determined never again to yield to the suggestions of despondency.

Whilst finishing his repast, the official, Hans, returned suddenly home, wholly unapprised of what had taken place; and great was his astonishment at seeing the young man (whom he immediately recognised) arrayed in some of his own clothes and partaking of his food. It is true, he had heard something of a child being rescued from drowning; but he knew not that it was his own till his wife related the occurrence; and the grateful Dutchman expressed the strongest gratitude.

'You are an Englishman,' said he,—'I know it. I love your countrymen; they have shed their blood to defend us from these Jacobins, who will soon lord it over us. I have now an additional plea for valuing them, and may the God of my fathers forsake me when I forget the obligation! The council have decided,—my brave old master resisted to the last, and will doubtless draw down the vengeance of the thieves upon his head. The French are to be admitted, an indemnity being given for the security of those who have opposed them. But what do they care for indemnities, who wash their hands in the blood of innocence?'

'When are they expected?' demanded our hero; and as they both understood the French language, they conversed with freedom.

'The gates are to be opened to-morrow for the advanced guard,' returned Hans; 'and it appears there have for several days past been spies in the town noting down the sentiments of the inhabitants towards them. Herr Vonestracht has spoken boldly, and is, I fear, a doomed man.'

'But Eugenia!' exclaimed Blocks. 'Oh, Hans, I have witnessed scenes would make the soul shudder even in narration! There are ruffians in that army capable of any enormity to gratify rapine, lust, and avarice: yet there are some,' and his thoughts reverted to Du Fay and St. Cyr, 'of better disposition. Oh, that they may be induced to prevent the outrages of those fiends who disgrace humanity!'

'The decree of the Convention cannot touch us, at all events,' said Hans, 'for we have surrendered within the twenty-four hours; and the stay of the army must necessarily be short, as they will pursue the Allies without loss of time. But a garrison will be left, no doubt. Still, my brave young friend, as an Englishman and the preserver of my child, I will peril much to serve you. Marie tells me you are acquainted with the burgomaster's daughter; for her, young man, I tremble: but you are going to the house, and we shall in all probability meet again. At present I must depart to attend upon the council; but Marie will be your guide to Herr Vonestracht's. You are an officer, I suppose?'

'I am,' replied our hero, and gave a brief sketch of the events that had thrown him into the hands of the enemy.

'You have suffered much, young gentleman,' said the official, rising to depart. 'May your future days have more of sunshine than of storm!'

He quitted the house, and Blocks fell into a painful rumination on the situation of Eugenia and his own untoward prospects. Whilst with Du Fay he had become well known to many of the officers of the French army, and his conduct relative to St. Cyr had gained him friends; but he feared that if discovered, he should be sent back a prisoner to France, and all hope of escape would be at an end: nay, he was justly apprehensive, from what he had already wit-

nessed, that his life would be taken as soon as he was removed from the protection of his friends. Besides, his heart yearned for the service of his country; his future prospects depended on his own exertions, and he determined to carve out for himself an imperishable name.

The shadows of night fell prematurely on the face of Nature, throwing a gloomy darkness over every feature, when the young midshipman, escorted by the wife of Hans, passed through the public streets, where groups of persons were collected together, some holding mysterious whisperings, others in stormy debate, but all in consternation at the close approximation of the French, and the certainty that Dort would soon be garrisoned by the soldiers of the Convention. The lamps were not yet illumined, very few lights twinkled in the close shops; but here and there a faint ray glimmered forth upon the fog, as a sort of medium to try its density. In about five minutes they paused before a lofty building, with its fantastic gable standing towards the street; and passing quickly under a small archway by the side of the house, they entered a doorway in the rear in the residence, and Blocks was ushered into a spacious apartment, manifesting much luxury with little taste. The furniture was heavy and gorgeous, the walls were dark oak, panelled and highly polished, and rich velvet curtains were drawn across the recess formed by the projecting window: a bright fire blazed in the stove, and imparted a cheering and pleasant warmth; the mirrors reflected the glowing flames and added to the effect: and there was about the whole an air of comfort and enjoyment that was peculiarly grateful to the young man's mind. Eugenia too was there to welcome him, and, with the lightness and elasticity of young hearts, in the indulgence of present happiness they forgot the threatening aspect of affairs.

The burgomaster returned home dissatisfied and uneasy; the council had determined on admitting the French as allies, and the whole town was in commotion. Indeed, what with the smoke from their pipes and the thick fog, the streets were hardly passable; and the gaseous vapours from immense potations of scheidam were so strong, that a practical chemist would have suffered the greatest alarm lest it should ignite and envelop Dort in one mass of burning ruins. The father of Eugenia received the young officer with much kindness, but with great gravity: indeed, his mind appeared to be tossed upon a sea of vexation that left him ill at ease. But it was time to get to covert, and as everyone, except Marie, Eugenia, and her father, was ignorant of our hero being in the house, it devolved upon the fair girl to prepare his place of concealment. The young Englishman followed his conductress into an apartment used as a sitting-room, and communicating with another by a small passage, having a door to each, so that when they were shut the passage was enclosed and formed a sort of closet measuring about six feet by four.

'This will be your retreat,' said Eugenia, as she stood in the passage; and pressing a spring in the wall, the panel flew open, and disclosed a flight of a few steps, which Blocks immediately ascended, and found himself in a recess between the walls of the two apartments. He could not stand upright; but there was a comfortable bed, a chair and table, and every preparation appeared to have been made for his reception. On either side were air-holes looking into both apartments, so that he could command a view of all that passed in the interior of each. 'I have laboured hard,' continued Eugenia, 'to arrange these little matters: you must be content with your cabin for the present—I hope it will not be for long.'

'Content!' returned Ten-thousand; 'this place is a palace to a man who for weeks has never stretched his limbs upon a bed softer than the ground. Oh, Eugenia! shall I ever be able to repay you for your kindness?'

'Wait,' said she, smiling; 'we know not what the fortune of war may produce. Only think kindly of me, my friend,' added she, with softened emotion, 'and come what may, I shall be happy.'

'Dear Eugenia,' uttered the young Englishman, tenderly pressing her hand and drawing her closely to him, 'how can I ever think otherwise than kindly of you? You were the first love of my heart, and I have never known another. Can you say as much?'

'Indeed—indeed I can,' returned she with firmness. 'I have never ceased to cherish remembrance of the young sailor; my affection remains unalterably yours—the interval of absence has only served to mature the feeling: and now,' added she, whilst a melancholy smile played upon her features, 'you are my prisoner—I have you caged, and hope to renew the pleasing themes of former days.'

'May Heaven bless you, Eugenia!' exclaimed the Englishman, folding the fair maiden in his arms, and imprinting a sweet kiss upon her pouting lips. 'But for you, probably I might have now been lying at the muddy bottom of the Maese!'—and he shuddered.

'What mean you?' hastily inquired Eugenia, as she looked with anxious earnestness in his face. Blocks told her of his despair when seated on the jetty; and when he had finished, the weeping girl added, 'But you must not give way again. Remember, the eye of Providence is always upon us; and if we look to the Almighty for protection, He will never abandon us in the hour of peril.'

'Such were the precepts inculcated by my worthy tutor Mr. Hector; and, Eugenia, I have found it so often and often,' assented the young officer, kissing away the tears that were falling down her cheek. 'Was other proof wanting of the fact,' he continued, 'my being here would amply supply the evidence. I, who so lately was a perishing outcast, driven from men's doors, and refused even a mouthful of the coarsest food, have been fed, and am now comfortably sheltered. I erred—greatly erred; but, oh, Eugenia! you know not what it is—God grant you may never know!—but I say, you never knew what it was to feel the death of hope within

a living heart,—a heart, too, that beats with generous sympathies for all my fellow-creatures.'

'You must have endured much, I'm certain,' said the maiden, looking with tenderness upon the attenuated form of her young friend; 'you are greatly altered, Ten, and perhaps no other eye than that which had a cherished remembrance of your person would so readily have recognised you. But I must leave you now; my father will be impatient at my absence, and his mind is sorely agitated. Good-night, Ten!—remember me in your prayers, as you used to do at the quiet parsonage. Good-night!'

Another embrace, and they parted. The young midshipman, by the light of his lamp, surveyed the place he was destined to occupy,—how long, was to him unknown; but he pleased himself with the idea that, with the occasional visits of Eugenia, he could not be otherwise than happy. In a few minutes afterwards, his body was nearly buried in down—he laughed and hugged himself in the delight of his luxury; but it was some time before sleep visited his weary frame—recollections of the past, the novelty of his present situation, and faint misty shadows of the future, kept him awake: Nature at length resumed her sway, and the tired youth sank into a sound repose.

CHAPTER VIII.

'Fate steals along with silent tread,
Found oftenest in what least we dread:
The earthquake may be bid to spare
A man that's strangled by a hair.'

THE French Revolution opened the path to eminence for thousands who would otherwise have probably remained in humble obscurity. It is true that *that* path was a bloody one—it is true that by far the chief portion of the individuals who pursued its course trod over the dead bodies of their fellow-countrymen, in whom they not unfrequently recognised their relatives and friends; but certain it is, that genius and talent prevailed, and gained that ascendancy which had been previously usurped by rank and riches. In no department was this more conspicuous than in the Republican army, and when compared with the attempts at official governments in Paris, with this remarkable difference—that whilst the former combated the enemies of France, and were consequently constantly exposed to the perils of the battle-field, yet escaped the carnage unscathed, the latter, in turn, perished by the guillotine, according to the predominance of opinion at the capital, and the prevalence of power in those who grasped at rule. The privileged orders had been swept away; to these succeeded the middle classes, who seized and conducted the executive, till the mob bared the arm of sanguinary vengeance and by physical force commenced the Reign of Terror. The assassins under Maillard subverted the National Assembly that had called them into being; the vile minister of justice, Danton, not only sanctioned, but promoted murder, and his own head subsequently rolled upon the scaffold, struck off by the decree of those in whose hands he had mainly contributed to place the axe. The Jacobins, under the villain Robespierre, subdued and massacred the Girondists; and in the revolving of the revolutionary wheel, Robespierre was himself decapitated by the same instrument of death to which he had consigned his colleague Danton; whilst the club that had spread devastation through the kingdom was crushed by the daring energy of the youth of Paris. But as the Revolutionists in the capital devoured each other, the Republican leaders of the army united in one common cause to expel the invaders of their country; and the generally-received opinion, that it required veterans who had devoted years of practical experience to study the art of war, to qualify them as leaders, was proved erroneous,—for we find young men entering the ranks in 1791, and generals of brigade in 1794. Of this number was the leader of the partisans, Michael Ney; Bessières, the after chief of the imperial guard; Augereau, the favourite of victory; Bernadotte, the sovereign of Sweden; the ferocious robber, Davoust, who, however, was in some measure an exception, being nobly born; the amiable St. Cyr; the gallant Moreau; the clever tactician, Soult; the unprincipled Laison; the intrepid but generous Murat: in short, a host of heroes sprang into sudden existence, astonishing the world by the wonderful deeds which they achieved.

Nearly the whole of these (who subsequently became so celebrated in history, as marshals with dukedoms and principalities), first fleshed their swords in Belgium and Holland, where the jealousy and treachery of the Allies, together with the bad management of the heads of the British army, aided the valour of the French, who drove the English from post to post, from city to city, spreading terror, devastation, and slaughter, as in their advance they compelled the Duke of York to retreat, and perpetrating atrocities which cause a sickly shuddering to the mind whilst merely contemplating them.

In the rage for passing censure upon Bonaparte, it has been too much the practice to attribute the excesses of his generals to the instructions and directions of their chief,—that he had, in fact, selected men for the cruelty of their dispositions, and by his tuition modelled them to suit his own peculiar purposes, so as to become a scourge to the human race. But this is formed in extreme ignorance or error: for, looking through the list of Napoleon's marshals, we shall find that most of them were in active service and high in rank when the young officer of artillery made his first grand essay at Toulon; they were, in fact, his superiors, raised in the heat of revolution, as a hotbed forces vegetation; their natures, their habits, were formed and fixed before the name of Bonaparte was heralded by Fame as the head of the Army of Italy; and when he drew them round him as subordinates, it was beyond his power to change the one or reform the other. Nor probably did he wish it—they were all that a commander-in-chief could desire, valiant, daring and skilful, and by their lustrous deeds

throwing a bright halo round the adventurous leader, whose ambition, exceeding that of his contemporaries, towered as a splendid centre round which his secondaries revolved. They were ready prepared to his hands, he did not create them; but he found them fit officers for such a commander-in-chief,—appropriate agents for such a principal.

But the reader inquires, 'What has this to do with our tale? what do we want to know about the French Revolution and Bonaparte?' Kind reader! our hero is fast asleep between two feather-beds, and therefore his biographer has taken leave to fill up the interval till he wakes, by a few lines to please himself: for what could be more ridiculous than a description of the snoring, snorting, and those peculiarly curious sounds emitted by weary nature in the hour of rest—in fact, it would be utterly impracticable; no dictionary could supply a language adequate to the task—a man might just as well attempt to spell or to paint the bray of a donkey. Nor is the matter wholly extraneous: our hero figured at an especial period, and we have brought down his history to the time when the rise of Napoleon was the overthrow of that Convention which had decreed annihilation to any garrison that should not surrender within twenty-four hours of the first summons, and death to all English prisoners that were taken in arms. But to return to Blocks.

Our hero's rest was undisturbed till towards daybreak, when the heavy booming of artillery, the reports of musketry, and the trampling of horses, aroused him from his lethargy. 'The French have entered the town,' thought he; 'and now what will become of Eugenia and her father? It was still dark, not a single ray of light penetrated into the closet; nor was there a human being near to whom he could address himself. The noise without continued—it was that wild tumult that strikes so fearfully upon the ear in the silence of night; but within was the startling stillness of the grave. Notwithstanding the occurrences that were passing so close to him, sleep again overpowered his faculties, till he was awoke by a bustle in the apartments which bounded his retreat, and listening, he clearly distinguished a conversation going in the French language.

'Are there to be no examples made,' inquired a harsh voice, 'no retributive justice?'

'It is uncalled for here,' answered another: 'we have long had our invitation from the principal inhabitants, and the surrender was made to the summons almost as soon as demanded.'

'Nevertheless, there has been much contumacy,' rejoined the first: 'have they not erected monuments* to British officers fighting against the Republic?'

'Bravery merits acknowledgment, let it belong to whom it will,' answered the other, mildly. 'For myself, I shall immediately push on with the main body: you will follow as speedily as possible with the reserve, leaving a suitable garrison behind.'

'I am all obedience,' returned the first, impatiently, belying his own words, and immediately retiring, but not till Ten-thousand had crept to the air-hole, and recognised Laison in the last speaker, and Moreau in the person whom he had addressed. The latter was standing near the heated stove, apparently enjoying the warmth that it dispensed; whilst a soldier was supplying him with coffee, which he swallowed with great relish. Near him were several officers, some scarcely past their boyhood, and all extremely youthful in their appearance; Blocks looked for Du Fay, but there was not a face amongst them which he knew.

'Gentlemen, you will be speedy with your refreshments,' exclaimed the general; 'one half-hour is all that you may call your own, till we enter Rotterdam, which, in the present state of the ice, may be accomplished by noon. Gentlemen, to your several duties as soon as hunger is appeased; I shall be at the Stadthouse in twenty minutes from this time.' The group dispersed; the sabres rattled, the spurs jingled, but soon all was again silent, and only the general and one aide remained. 'Where is our host?' inquired Moreau; and then looking round the room, 'Mon Dieu! but these heavy Dutchmen are well acquainted with creature-comforts: that coffee was most excellent, and the petite liqueur most exquisite.' His voice lowered to sadness, 'Delhaume, in such a peaceful retreat as this, the heart revolts at civil strife and human sacrifice. The monsters who lately held dominion in our country have destroyed each other, yet fresh tyrants have arisen, and new victims are called for. It would shame me to acknowledge such men as rulers: yet it is not for them, but for France we conquer. La gloire coûte à acquérir; mais, it must bring peace and honour at the last. But where is our host?'

'I will seek him, citizen general,' returned the young man addressed; and he quitted the room.

Moreau stood silent as if in deep thought; but so delicate was his sense of hearing, that the respiration of our hero, light as it was, suddenly caught his notice, and Blocks saw his keen eye directed to the air-hole at which he was watching. Guessing the cause, in an instant he held his breath, and remained motionless till the aide's return without the worthy burgomaster, who was not to be found, and no one could give any account of the cause of his absence: it was supposed he had gone to the Town-house, but this rested on conjecture.

'And now for Rotterdam, mon ami!' exclaimed the general: 'we must teach these Eng-

* This was most probably an allusion to the monument erected to the memory of Lieutenant Western of the *Syren*, in the church at Dort. This gallant young man, in May, 1793, whilst in command of some gunboats, surprised and drove the French from the batteries they had erected in the neighbourhood of Williamstadt, and took possession of their artillery. On the following morning, whilst pointing a gun at one of the French batteries in the Moordyke, he was struck in the head by a musket-ball, and almost immediately expired. At the age of twenty-two he terminated his career; and his funeral at Dort was attended by the Duke of York and the brigade of foot-guards, as well as the officers and seamen of the navy.

lish not to interfere in the quarrels of their neighbours.' Another officer entered. 'Well, major, and what intelligence do you bring?'

'The Stadtholder has escaped in an open boat, and is supposed to have gone to England; Amsterdam opened her gates last night—Monsieur le général-en-chef has by this time become master of it; General Bernadotte will join you at Rotterdam,' answered the person addressed.

'We must be moving, then: To horse, Delhaume,' ordered Moreau; 'and, major, you will accompany me. Our country must do us justice when despotism shall be crushed. Where are the English?'

'Retreating on the line of the Issel, and without a hope, mon général. Our campaign in the North has ended; but we shall soon find work in a warmer clime: we shall quit the land of fogs and ice for the sunny paradise of Italy, for to there assuredly will the war be transferred.'

'Most probably, major,' returned Moreau; 'and now for Rotterdam! Laison will remain in Dort, and, no doubt, will squeeze the burgomasters' purses. The English, you say, continue in full retreat: and the Prussians?— —' —'Are treacherous, as usual:' answered the major as they were quitting the apartment: 'they are receiving pay from England to continue the war, and sending deputations to Paris with terms for peace.'

They departed, and quiet once more prevailed. Blocks partook of the food that had been provided for him, and then waited in impatient anxiety under expectations of gaining some intelligence of Eugenia. The observations relative to her father had not escaped him, and feverish apprehensions crossed his heart and mind. He descended the steps and tried the door; the key was within-side the lock—he turned it, drew the door open, but there was yet a panel to pass, which, he remembered, had been opened from without by touching a spring which he could not discover. Whilst deliberating what course he should pursue, the sound of approaching footsteps, with the clattering of sabres, met his ear, and instantly retreating to his recess, he once more stationed himself at his observatory. Scarcely had he got fixed, than a number of officers entered the room, at the head of whom he recognised the unprincipled Laison.

'Our gallant schoolmaster has left us,' said the brigadier-general; 'his morality does not suit a Dutch campaign. Nothing will move the nerves of a burgomaster but the point of a bayonet, or the edge of the sabre. Have they a guillotine in Dort?'

'They have not yet reached that pitch of refinement,' answered one of the party. 'I believe they still hang to the gibbet.'

'Then to the gibbet shall they hang,' returned Laison, 'unless they compensate my loss for the Luxembourg affair. What! do they expect we are to travel all this distance to give them freedom without paying for it?'

'They have no monasteries* in Dort,' said one of the officers slily.

'Tush,—heed it not, man!' exclaimed the brigadier, laughing. 'And yet it moves my spleen to think that the apostles and the priests of Reason—those who abolished the Sabbath and divinity, should make so much stir about a few old monks! But mark me, gentlemen, they despoiled the spoiler, and converted the plunder to their own especial uses.'

'There was some gold and silver in that place, I've heard,' said another.

'You're right,' assented Laison; 'there was wealth enough to have purchased a principality, but they seized it all; and now these burgomasters must pass through the vice to make up the deficiency. Gentlemen, to your several duties,—see the garrison relieved, and then we will partake of sumptuous fare, which these same Dutchmen shall provide at the Stadthouse. Should any resistance be offered to your orders, place the heads of the culprits to the muzzle of a gun and blow them to the devil!'

'But feel their pockets first!' exclaimed a little shrivelled-up wretch, with features like a baboon, and grinning most horribly.

'Soyez tranquille, monsieur!' said Laison gaily; 'mes enfans will follow in their father's steps. But to your duties, gentlemen; and remember the festival, at three o'clock, in the Stadthouse. Dubois, remain with me.'

There was something in the name of Dubois that jarred upon our hero's ears; but it was only the name, as the individual addressed was standing with his back towards young Blocks, and he knew that the body of the suspected prisoner who made his escape from the *Scratchee* had been picked up in Plymouth Sound. Nevertheless, a sort of tremor shook him from head to foot, as a presentiment of something unpleasant in prospective for which he could not account.

Laison seated himself near the stove; and when the officers had departed, 'Dubois,' said he, 'you have already shown that I may confide in you. That affair at the monastery would have made our fortunes, had not humanity induced us to spare the shaven hypocrites. However, we must not meddle again with monks,—they are too knowing for us plain soldiers. But these same Hollanders are wealthy; and the owner of the house we are in is, I understand, the wealthiest of the wealthy;—besides, I'm told he has a pretty daughter.—Nay, chuckle not,—I care but little for female beauty, whilst gold is to be got; though, certainly, a rich burgomaster's handsome daughter is not to be despised.'

'But, monsieur le général-en-chef,' responded the officer addressed, and the sounds of his voice awakened strange emotions in Ten-thousand's mind.

'I care for neither Pichegru, Jourdan, nor any of them,' returned the hardened robber. 'Mon

* The Convention had prohibited attacks upon religious houses; but Laison, in despite of the prohibition, pillaged and destroyed a rich monastery on the frontiers of Luxembourg, for which he was tried, and would probably have been condemned to death, but that a member of the Convention stood his friend and saved him. The plunder of the monastery was taken from him, but to what use appropriated history does not relate.

Dieu ! is not war our stock-in-trade, our capital, —and are we not justified in making the best market? Moreau wanted to see Mynheer Wonderstruck, and then there would have been a full indemnity for past offences ; but, Dubois, I took care of that, and placed the old Dutchman under close confinement in his own cellar among his gin-casks ; and the jolie demoiselle is keeping her father company. Here is the key, Dubois, —fetch them hither, mon ami.'

The officer took the key ; and when he turned to obey the directions of his superior, the whole of his features became fully exposed to young Blocks, who beheld in his countenance the exact fac-simile of the mate of the *Commerce de L'Orient*,—the attendant upon Acheson during his illness,—the runaway prisoner, who was more than supposed to have been drowned. There was no mistaking them, for they were indelibly marked upon our hero's memory from mysterious hints and allusions he had from time to time let fall whilst conversing with him on board the frigate. But names may be alike, and features be alike ; yet it seldom happened that both agreed in the same person,—it was a mystery he could not solve, and something like a superstitious dread clouded his mind. During the absence of Dubois, Laison amused himself by sounding the polished panels that wainscoted the room, and he had closely approximated to the retreat of our hero, when his envoy returned, conducting in the worthy burgomaster and the beautiful Eugenia. The general instantly quitted his *pastime*, and handing the terrified maiden a chair, he re-seated himself by the stove.

'Mynheer,' said Laison, carelessly throwing his sabre between his legs, so as to produce an effect by the clanging ring of the weapon,— 'Mynheer, it is best on all occasions to be candid and explicit,—two qualities for which my friends, but more particularly my enemies, give me a large balance of credit. Now, mynheer, some of our chiefs claim to be the generals of the Republic,— others fight for the love of France ; whilst I—you will admire my candour ! —Dubois, place the burgomaster a chair, mon ami !' The request was complied with, and the venerable man, almost exhausted, sat down, as Laison, with attempts to be insinuating and agreeable, repeated—'I was saying, mynheer, that whilst some clamned to hold their commands from the Convention, and others fought through national love, I am the soldier of fortune, and I make it a point of honour to court the favour of my fickle mistress. I am poor, mynheer, and require a few thousand livres for present disbursement ;—you are rich, and—— Nay, hear me out,' for Vonestracht was about to interrupt him,—'I see I must be explicit : I am poor, and you are rich ;—I want a thousand or two of livres, which, I know, you can favour me with, and that too without detriment to your fair daughter, whose beauty alone is a mine of wealth if well applied. The livres, mynheer,— what say you?—Sit down, Dubois.'

The burgomaster looked as if thunderstruck at the impudence of the demand, and yet feared to resist the ruthless wretch who had imprisoned him and taken possession of his house. At length he replied, 'No doubt, monsieur le général, that levies will be made in aid of France, and I must bear my proportion of the burthen ; but the good citizens of Paris have not yet made the demand, and therefore, monsieur, I cannot see the justice of your claim.'

'I am always candid, mynheer,' said Laison, smoothing his harsh voice to the best of his ability. 'I told you I was a soldier of fortune, and therein I spoke nothing but the truth. With the levy of the Convention I cannot interfere ; you must make the best bargain you can with them. Mais, grace à Dieu !' and the wretch crossed himself, 'I am beforehand with them ; and though little acquainted with mercantile affairs, I know something of the law from my worthy sire, who is a humble member of the profession. Now, mynheer, I'll suppose a case :— A. threatens the whole of your property, and B. steps in with a promise, that if presented with a small portion, he will secure you the rest. What do you think would be the best for you to do?'

'No man dare threaten another's property without some legal claim to it, whether imaginary or real,' answered the burgomaster calmly. 'Who dare say that the property of Herr Vonestracht, little as it is,' and here he lowered his voice,— 'who will pretend to say that it is not his own?'

'Eh bien, mon ami !' uttered Laison, as a flush of anger reddened up his cheeks, 'there are glorious uncertainties in war as well as in law: the sabre of the chasseur,' and he shook his own, 'not unfrequently is as capricious as the wand of harlequin in effecting transformations. I have seen much of it, mynheer, and would recommend you to part with your doublet if thereby you can save your *small*-clothes ;' and he pointed laughingly to the capacious nether vestments of the stout old burgomaster.

'I do not perceive that either are in danger, monsieur,' responded the Dutchman.

'Diable !' uttered the Frenchman impatiently. 'I will appeal to ma'am'selle whether I have not been explicit and candid in my proposition.'

'Der duyvil !' responded the Dutchman with bitter sternness. 'Will you place the child in judgment on her father ? Retire to your room, Eugenia ; these scenes are not fitting for young females to witness.'

Eugenia tremblingly arose and stood by the side of her parent ; and the firmness of the burgomaster, together with the alarm upon the countenance of the daughter, for a moment or two awed the brigand in whose power they were placed.

'Ma'am'selle will do me the favour to resume her seat,' said Laison, rising from his chair and placing that of Eugenia nearer to her father. She again sat down. 'And now, mynheer, let us understand each other. You are, I am told, worth five hundred thousand livres.'

'Der duyvil !' vociferated the Dutchman in a rage. 'There are liars in the world : I am not worth the half of that.'

'And a pretty fortune too, mynheer,' answered Laison. 'Two hundred and fifty thousand livres

would purchase a few months' pleasure in Paris. But I am not extortionate; it is true I might grasp the whole, but I ask for a mere thousand or two—say ten, and the rest shall remain in your own possession.'

'Show me the authority by which you claim it,' demanded the burgomaster angrily. 'I will not part with a stiver unless compelled by legal means.' Where is your authority?'

The brigadier forcibly struck his sabre, and the ring of the steel reverberated round the room. 'A soldier of fortune,' said he, 'finds his best authority in his trusty sword; but, to satisfy your wavering and dubious mind,' and his voice resumed its revolting harshness as he drew a paper from his breast, 'I have here the warrant of the Convention, dooming to death all those who have rendered themselves particularly obnoxious by their resistance to the summons of our leaders.' Eugenia's cheeks assumed an ashy paleness, but her father sat unmoved. 'Now, mynheer, you must or ought to be sensible that a public execution involves a confiscation of property to the State. Both are within this hand,' and he held out the folded paper, 'your life, your property, and both may be saved by a gift of ten thousand livres. Do you understand me now?'

'I have done my duty by my country,' said the burgomaster firmly; 'and he who would plunder me of ten thousand livres, would not scruple to sacrifice both life and property as soon as his object was achieved. What guarantee can you give?'

'My honour,' responded the wretch, laying his hand upon his heart and inclining his head.

Vonestracht made no immediate reply, but his look of contempt was a stronger evidence than words of the estimation in which he held the honour of Laison. At length he answered, 'Let the thing be done publicly before witnesses, and—'

'Here are Dubois and your daughter,' said Laison. 'But I see you wish for time to deliberate;' and turning to Dubois, he added, 'Mon ami, conduct mynheer to the pleasant retirement from whence he came. Ma'am'selle would perhaps prefer the company of a gallant soldier.'

'I will not quit my father,' exclaimed the maiden, roused to the spirit of resistance by the brutal levity of the brigadier, and sensible that the eyes of Blocks were overlooking her conduct. 'Our doom shall be the same;' and she clung to her parent's arm.

'Most affectionate and dutiful,' said Laison, 'and uttered with proper animation. Mon Dieu! but I must sound a retreat from these delightful quarters, or ma'am'selle will carry my heart by storm, and—' the heavy booming of a gun shook the building. 'Hark! there is summary execution going on—some unfortunate has been blown to atoms;' and his countenance assumed a fiendish ferocity as he gazed intently on his prisoners, who seemed to sicken with horror at the sound and the reputed cause. After an interval of two or three minutes, during which the report of another gun was heard, the human tiger seemed to scent blood, and impatiently exclaimed, 'Take them away, Dubois! Mynheer, I grant you one hour:—either the ten thousand livres, or'—and he held up the paper as decisive of their fate. Without uttering a word, they followed the officer, and the alarm of our hero suffered a reprieve.

During the absence of Dubois, Laison examined the paintings, some of which were remarkably fine, by the old Flemish masters, and one or two extremely rare; but his eyes seemed more attracted by the gilding of the frames than the excellency of the pictures, probably from not being acquainted with their value. Several soldiers, irregularly dressed, entered, carrying cabinets of unique workmanship, cases of various kinds, circular and other packages; in short, as the visits now under the superintendence of Dubois were rather frequent, the floor of the sleeping apartment was speedily covered with articles of all descriptions.

'Bravely accomplished, my bold partisans!' said the brigadier gaily, and dispensing a handful of untold gold to each: 'and did the Dutchmen, with their "yaw weil vrows," part with their commodities unresistingly?'

'Non, monsieur,' replied a ferocious-looking sergeant; 'the surly mastiffs growled, and would have bit, but that we have a way of our own to muzzle them.'

'Most inimitable of muzzlers,' returned Laison, 'I will not forget your zeal, you have served me like soldiers of fortune; and, now, heroes of France, worthy the name of Indéfatigables, make the most you can for yourselves: I am in command, and Captain Dubois will aid you in your honest avocations; he will talk to and reason with them; il aime la bâfre. And that reminds me, Dubois, of the festival I have ordered: ayez la complaisance to step to the Stadthouse and see if those worthy burgomasters, whose blood circulates in their veins as slowly as their frozen rivers—see if they are making preparation; a slight hint or two with the flat of the sabre on their nether eminences may save them from a fit of apoplexy. Brave partisans! to your professional duties; and should anything fall in your way which you think might prove acceptable—I need say no more.'

Dubois and the men departed; and Laison, without loss of time, locked the door, and proceeded to examine his treasure: cabinets of jewellery, watches, massive gold and silver plate of different kinds, money, velvet, silks—in short, the richest of everything that could be plundered from public shops or private houses. The brigadier seemed to gloat over the articles with the utmost delight; he tested the plate, and finding that two or three pieces of large dimensions were merely washed, he exclaimed, 'Mon Dieu! quelle vilenie,' and threw them on one side in anger. The cash was considerable, and he ran his fingers in amongst it, clutching the heaps with eager avidity, and then spreading the coin out to satisfy his sight.

From this state of seeming delirium he was aroused by a knocking at the door of the sitting-room, which (after securely closing that of the

sleeping apartment) he opened, and an officer entered to announce a deputation of the burgomasters to wait upon him. The brigadier seated himself near the stove, and six heavy-eyed, large-headed, square-sterned Dutchmen entered, having Hans for an interpreter. Laison arose, and bowed to the deputation with an air of obsequious respect, and then, with a show of humility, said, 'Gentlemen burgomasters, what are your requests? I shall be but too happy in attending to them.'

Hans stepped boldly forward, and replied, 'Monsieur le général, the citizens of Dort come to complain of the treatment they have received from the troops of the French Republic: their warehouses, their shops, their houses have been plundered; they have looked for protection and found treachery; they——'

'Et avec raison, messieurs de la deputation,' returned the brigadier more harshly. 'You have been contumacious, aiding our enemies, and putting us to great expense; a waste of blood and treasure has taken place, and though you cannot restore the former,' and here he rattled his sabre against the stove as if by accident, 'we feel ourselves entitled to repayment of some portion of the latter. Where there is repletion, phlebotomy becomes beneficial to the patient's unhealthy state. Gentlemen, if you have been somewhat phlebotomised, it will do you good—it will renew the proper action of your hearts. You have been contumacious, and——'

'Non, monsieur,' responded Hans, with a scowl of singular meaning; 'these deputies have not been amongst the number of your enemies: they come from those who sent the invitations to your chief; they advocated your cause in the council; they——'

'Had French hearts in Dutch bottoms,' interrupted Laison, with a perfect command of countenance. 'Eh bien, they have been traitors to their country; and surely they ought not to find fault if, after so kind an invitation to their town, we act on the most friendly terms and help ourselves. However, the thing shall be seen into;' and without allowing Hans to explain, he bowed them from the room. 'These boors become troublesome,' said he; 'a few of the muzzlers must see to them; how dare they interfere in the affairs of honest men!' Dubois entered. 'Ha! mon ami, I ask no questions, but hope you have met with success. Be pleased to take the keys and bring up the burgomaster and his daughter; they are on that table,' pointing to a marble slab that was placed near the door, and on which the deputation had deposited their hats.

'They are not here, monsieur,' uttered Dubois whilst searching; 'you probably have laid them somewhere else.'

'Eh, mon Dieu!' shouted Laison, starting up and eagerly looking in all parts of the room. He suddenly stopped short, and exclaimed, 'The deputation!—run, Dubois, and see if the prisoners are safe, whilst I continue my search.'

Dubois obeyed, but in a few minutes hastily returned to say 'the doors were locked, but no one answered to his call.' Our hero quickly comprehended the whole matter: Hans had possessed himself of the keys, and being well acquainted with the premises, had availed himself of the opportunity to release his old master and Eugenia from confinement.

'They are gone,' exclaimed the brigadier, 'they are off! My vengeance shall pursue them! I have lost my ten thousand livres, but the rogue shall dearly repent his trick. Hasten, Dubois, and leave no stone unturned to trace them out. The girl too—she was pretty, high-spirited, and ——. But go, Dubois; I place great reliance on your judgment. Find them me, or—' his rage became terrific—he literally foamed; and, witnessing such an ebullition of passion, Ten-thousand offered up praise to the Divine Being for their escape from such a demon. 'Gateaud!' shrieked the brigadier, and a sergeant entered, —'Gateaud! a lever, a crow-bar!—dépêchez, coquin!' The sergeant withdrew to execute the order, but was almost immediately followed by Laison, who carefully locked the doors of both rooms after him.

It would be impossible to describe the feelings of young Blocks whilst overlooking the proceedings that have been here but faintly sketched. He rejoiced that Eugenia and her father had got off, for he made no doubt that such was the case; but then the precariousness of his own situation rushed upon his mind,—though he felt convinced that, next to the safety of herself and parent, the noble-minded girl would think of him. He once more descended the steps—opened the door of his confinement, but without effect,—the panel, cased inside with iron, remained immovable, and he reluctantly returned to his hiding-place.

In about a quarter of an hour, the brigadier and the sergeant returned. The former was more appeased, and putting on his cloak, he said, 'Gateaud, I had intelligence of this house before we entered; there are secret places about it in which'—Ten-thousand's ears tingled—'in which much wealth is concealed. I have a few things in the next room, which might tempt dishonest men to unworthy deeds; yet I must away to the Stadthouse. I say, I selected this place for my temporary residence, Gateaud, for purposes it is not necessary for me to mention: you must remain here, sergeant,—here, in this apartment—till my return; and keep strict guard that nothing be missing. There will be promotion soon, and you know I have some influence with Pichegru;—you understand me, Gateaud.' The sergeant bowed. 'There, then, are the keys: be prudent and vigilant; think of your commission;—remember, I have promised.' And he quitted the room.

The sergeant, a fine young man, in the uniform of the chasseurs, inspected the goods in the next apartment, and then helped himself to some choice liqueurs that were standing in curious white glass bottles. The cordial was sweet and delicious,—he placed it by his side as he sat down near the stove, and made frequent applications to it, till overcome with the warmth of the fire, the soporific nature of the liquor, and pre-

vious fatigue, he sank into a deep and heavy slumber.

Blocks was aware that it was some time past noon, and that the festival at the Stadthouse was to take place at three o'clock; he, therefore, felt anxious for Laison's return; but the hour passed over, gloomy darkness began to fall on all around, and still the sergeant slept.

There was yet a glimmering of twilight in that spacious room, just sufficient to render the dark panels more frowning and funereal in aspect, and to give the sleeping soldier a more gigantic appearance, when Blocks perceived a strange figure stealthily moving across the floor, and stopping occasionally, as if in indecision. There was no footfall to be heard, and scarcely a motion could be discerned;—it was, in fact, precisely the sort of being which imagination might conjure up to act upon such a mystic stage, to glide noiselessly along in spectral dignity. What or who it was, and from whence it had come, were alike unknown to our hero; he had not heard the opening of the door, and it was too dark in that extremity to see, and a feeling of superstition that the restless spirit of the dead was before him horrified his soul. The figure approached the sergeant, and was removing the heavy sabre of the chasseur, when the weapon fell and he sprang instantly to his feet. The impulse was but momentary; for, the next instant, the stranger struck him a blow on the breast that reverberated with a hollow sound,—the soldier gave a heavy groan, and fell prostrate to the ground, where, after a few struggles, he lay perfectly still. A low guttural laugh succeeded this exploit, and the stranger, taking a taper from the table, lighted it at the stove. With spirit-harrowed mind Blocks watched the process, and the rays of light fell on a mask of coloured crape which concealed the features of the individual; they were then directed to the sergeant, who lay extended on his back: the stranger stooped and drew from the soldier's breast a dagger that had pierced his heart,—a copious gush of blood followed, and Ten-thousand became aware that the sergeant was a corpse.

The assassin was enveloped in a grey military cloak, which he folded close about him, and taking the key of the inner room from the dead body, he opened the door, and immediately walked to the spot where Laison had deposited the money, which was in canvas bags. Hastily grasping at the gold, he retraced his steps to the outer room—the covering was removed from his face, and Blocks beheld the haggard but inflamed countenance of Dubois. An impulse of indignation had very narrowly urged our hero to upbraid and execrate the villain; and had he done so, it is very probable his memoir would have terminated in this page: but prudence and presence of mind did not desert him—he remained quiet, and thus saved his life.

The murderer took a copious draught of cordial, and then examined every part of the room as if searching for some place to conceal his ill-gotten plunder. Repeatedly he directed his attention to the air-holes communicating with our hero's retreat, till at length, by means of the chairs, he reached them with his hands, and Blocks saw one thrust in close to him. After groping about and just touching the floor with the tips of the fingers, it was withdrawn, and Dubois descended. The murderer drew the sabre of the chasseur, smeared it with its late master's blood, and placed it by the side of the corpse near the sword-arm, and in such a position that it might be supposed to have fallen with him. He then took up the gold and was preparing to depart, when the sound of footsteps ascending the stairs were heard, and hastily extinguishing the taper, he remounted the chair, and Blocks heard the bags of gold fall into his little room; and the next minute there was a loud knocking at the door, and our hero made sure that the wretch would be taken in his guilt. A voice, which he well knew to be that of Dubois, shouted 'Gateaud!—monsieur le sergeant! ouvre la porte.' The confusion outside increased,—instruments were at work, heavy blows resounded, at length the door yielded to the pressure and was forced—a flood of light from blazing flambeaux illumined the whole scene. Laison, with about a dozen officers, rushed in, and the gabbling that ensued was deafening. Dubois, who had re-entered with them, raised the body of the prostrate soldier, and was vehement in his denunciations. 'Pauvre Gateaud!' said he, 'thou hast been foully done by! Mais, mon général, he has not fallen unrevenged: his sabre streams with the blood of his enemy.'

Laison hastened into the inner room, and immediately missed his gold. 'Mon Dieu, mon Dieu!' he very appropriately exclaimed, 'I'm robbed! The thief cannot be far off: guard the door, and let every part of the house be searched; relieve the sentinels at the gates, and send them hither! Mon Dieu, mon Dieu! c'est un sacrilége.'

A close inspection of the apartments commenced. The air-holes excited general observation; and just as Dubois re-entered from relieving the sentinels, he beheld an officer ascending to examine them. 'They are nothing,' exclaimed he, 'except communicating with a flue for the purpose of ventilation.'

'Mais, monsieur le capitaine,' responded the officer, 'here is visibly the impression of a bloody hand upon the wall;—and, diable! the blood is still wet.'

'Bring crows and mallets,' shouted Laison; 'break down the panels. Where are the partisans?'

With whatever feeling Dubois heard this order given, certain it is that it came like the knell of expiring hope to poor Blocks; for, though there was a brick wall within the panels, yet it might be easily demolished, and he would then be exposed to view. The instruments of demolition were brought, and no one was now more eager than Dubois; a stage was made of the tables, and the work of destruction was about to commence, when operations were suspended by the entrance of a small party of officers, one of whom authoritatively inquired what it all meant.

'A foul murder has been committed,' exclaimed Dubois, 'and here lies the corpse of our slaughtered countryman!'

'But your breaking up the house will not restore the man,' rejoined the first with some degree of asperity. 'How is this general—will you do me the favour to explain?'

Laison's propensities were no secret in the army, for he was a reckless robber; but the thought of his previous narrow escape crossed his mind, and rather embarrassed him: at length, he answered, 'I left the sergeant in my quarters to protect my baggage—the one has been murdered, and the other plundered. From what I can learn—and there are the sentinels—the assassin must be concealed somewhere in the house, which I know, from accurate information, has many secret places. The holes yonder induced a suspicion that they might communicate with one or more of them, and we were preparing to put it to the proof.'

'But no one could have entered so small an aperture as that, monsieur,' said the superior officer gravely.

'Here is the mark of a bloody hand,' exclaimed Dubois—'here, upon this very wall.'

'That cannot be so remarkable a thing, Captain Dubois,' uttered a voice which Ten-thousand instantly recognised as Du Fay's, 'since yours are so deeply stained.'

A half-stifled expression of terror escaped the villain as he gazed upon his hands and saw the dark gore that covered them; but instantly rallying again, he said, 'It is even so, colonel; but these marks on the wall were discovered before I ascended: the stains were received by raising the body of poor Gateaud.'

'Artful monster!' thought Blocks: 'the blood of his victim is on his hands, and he thus accounts for it.'

'If there is any secret place,' said the superior, 'assuredly the entrance is not there.'

'But we may ascertain whether it exists or not by breaking down the panel,' responded Laison.

'True, very true,' replied the superior; 'but let every other part of the building be duly searched in the meantime. How, sentinels,—saw you no one enter or escape?'

'None, save Captain Dubois,' answered the sentinel. 'He gave the word and entered, but did not go out again.'

'Oui, mon général,' responded Dubois, 'I came to see that all was safe, but could not gain admission to the room;' and he turned to Laison.

'It is true,' asserted the brigadier. 'I must have been pretty close upon his heels, and I found him knocking to get in; but the dead could not hear.'

'There certainly is a mystery. Thrust in your arm or a sabre, and try the depth of that hole,' ordered the new-comer.

A youth bared his arm and thrust it in. 'It is extensive,' said he, 'and here is something heavy.' He drew out one of the bags, on which were the yet wet marks of bloody fingers. A second and a third followed, and a deep silence prevailed.

'You are wasting time there,' exclaimed a voice in half Dutch, half French; 'here lies the secret way;' and he led them to the panel in the passage. 'I know the place well,' said the miscreant; 'this house was long my home. Here,'—he touched the spring, the panel flew back and revealed the door,—'here you may find out the murderer, if he be not already of our company;' and he fixed his eyes upon Dubois. Ten-thousand heard the crashing of the hammers on the lock; he stood erect in the white gown which Eugenia had provided for him as a robe-de-chambre; the door was burst open, the aperture was filled with radiance from the torches. 'He is here, he is here!' exclaimed Dubois, springing up the steps, sabre in hand, to destroy what he deemed the only witness against him: but his eye caught the pale features of our hero;—an instantaneous recognition took place: his steps were stayed; he recoiled backwards, uttering in good English, 'It is indeed he—the injured one!' and he fell senseless to the ground.

Du Fay had followed closely upon Dubois, and he also immediately recollected the young Englishman, who stood like a statue as he contemplated the approach of his enemies. 'There is some mistake here, general,' exclaimed Du Fay, placing himself in front of the midshipman, and keeping the rest at bay. Still, from what he had witnessed at Ostend, he doubted whether there was not some corresponding link between him and the slain soldier; but he determined to gain time, fully assured that nothing dishonourable was connected with it. 'Stand back!' he shouted, baring his sabre, and placing himself upon the defensive. 'If he is guilty, let him suffer the penalty which the law awards the crime. Stand back! I say,' for they were pressing on him. 'You shall pass over my body ere you shall make that youth a sacrifice.'

Cries of disapprobation, mingled with curses and execrations, and the clash of weapons, now resounded. Ten-thousand had seized the sabre of the inanimate Dubois, determined to defend his life as long as power remained, when the sonorous voice of the superior arose above the *mêlée*, commanding silence. The storm was hushed; the parties retreated from the closet into the great room, but not till one of them had picked up a poniard on which the vital stream hung in thick clouts. Ten-thousand yielded his sword to Du Fay, and having surrendered himself a prisoner, accompanied his friend into the presence of the chief, who had seated himself in a remote part of the room; whilst the corpse of the sergeant was conveyed to the table, and there extended for inspection.

Blocks looked at the countenance of the chief; it was hard and firm, but there was an expression which displayed loftiness of mind and generosity of purpose,—at least, so thought our hero, and he felt more at ease. By his right side stood General St. Cyr, behind him was the youthful but sanguinary Davoust, and on his left appeared General Laison: the other officers ranged themselves at a more respectful distance. A

strong light from the flambeaux fell upon the principal group, and rendered the whole particularly conspicuous. Colonel du Fay stationed himself near the prisoner ; and the other parts of the room were almost crowded with the soldiers of the guard, and those who attended the different officers.

The chief turned to Laison. 'Do you charge this youth with the murder of your sergeant, general? I have examined the wound, and it must have been a heavier arm than his that struck the blow.'

'The poniard is sharp, and Gateaud might have been sleeping,' returned the brigadier

'Young man, you know what you are charged with ; what have you to say?' inquired the superior.

'That I am innocent,' answered our hero boldly. 'The hands of the assassin must be stained with blood ; look at mine.' He held them out ; a shivering sickness came over his heart, for there, upon his very fingers, and particularly on the right hand, appeared the damning spots which he himself had named as the test of guilt.

The chief shook his head. 'If every witness you can produce gives no better testimony, young man, you will not mend your situation.'

'It was from Dubois's sword I received the stains,' exclaimed Ten-thousand, the truth flashing on his mind ; 'and yet it is Gateaud's blood.'

'For what purpose did you conceal yourself in that place?' demanded the chief. But our hero was silent ; he could not explain without compromising the safety of the father of Eugenia. 'You are stubborn, sir,' said the general. 'Do you refuse to answer my question?'

'I must most respectfully decline,' uttered Ten-thousand.

'Justice and Bernadotte !' exclaimed a voice in the crowd. 'Justice on the murderer of our countryman !' A simultaneous shout followed —'Vive Bernadotte ! Vive la Justice !'

The general waved his hand, and when silence was restored, he continued,—'Young man, a heavy crime is laid to your charge : on what ground do you refuse an answer to my question, why you there concealed yourself?'

'On the ground of honour,'—replied Ten-thousand firmly ; and a murmur of approbation arose amongst the crowd.

'I have heard of honour amongst thieves,' said Bernadotte, turning to Laison, 'but not amongst murderers.' He again addressed the midshipman : 'To what nation do you belong?'

Blocks again hesitated, lest he should implicate Du Fay; but the latter urged him to acknowledge, as his sister Pauline had already divulged the secret. 'I am a British naval officer,' exclaimed the young Englishman ; 'who will affix disgrace to the name or character?' At this moment his eye caught the blanched and haggard features of Dubois ; he started, his voice became piercingly shrill, as he almost screamed, 'There—there stands a traitor, and the murderer of Gateaud !' and he pointed to the assassin.

The persons behind whom Dubois was standing partly concealed, opened to the right and left, and conscious guilt was revealed. Yet he did not move, he did not offer to stir, but, raising his voice to a sonorous pitch, he solemnly denied the allegation.

'Whatever hazard I may run,' exclaimed Du Fay, with energetic warmth, 'I will pledge my life for the honour of this youth.'

'And mine shall be added to the bond,' uttered St. Cyr, with more calmness, but equally firm.

'Here is a mystery, I perceive,' said the general-in-chief, with a melancholy attempt at a smile. 'You know this youth, St. Cyr?'

'Mon général,' returned the other proudly, 'the whole army know him by the voice of fame: it is the youth whose intrepidity saved me from the knife of the fanatic in the streets of Ghent.'

A dead silence had ensued after the question of General Bernadotte had been put, and scarce a breath was drawn during the response of St. Cyr ; but the moment he had ceased, a burst of applause shook the very roof, and the veterans pressed forward to express their acknowledgments to the young Englishman.

'My brave companions,' said Bernadotte, rising with dignity from his chair, 'you shall have ample justice for the murder of your comrade ; but we must not be precipitate. Captain Dubois shall be placed under arrest, and the young Englishman shall be returned to his closet with a proper guard. I shall remain here this night ; to-morrow the cause shall be well tried before a military tribunal at the Stadthouse. Retire, my comrades, and trust to your general for redress.'

A simultaneous shout of 'Vive Bernadotte ! Vive la Justice !' was the signal for retreating : the room was speedily cleared of all but the general-in-chief and the officers. Dubois was confined in one of the apartments ; and Blocks was again consigned to his retreat, whither Du Fay accompanied him, and to whom he related every incident that had occurred since their parting.

'You are in the midst of wolves, my young friend,' said the marquis : 'Pauline has told her husband all, even the death of Tiercelin ; and could any means be devised for your escape—— But I must not talk thus : let what will betide, in Du Fay you shall ever find a friend.'

They parted ; the door was closed, a sentinel was posted in the passage, and Ten-thousand, wearied and dispirited, threw himself upon his bed to sleep ; but the events of the day had murdered rest,—his slumbers were disturbed by dreams reviving the occurrences he had witnessed, with additions of the wild and horrible. Often did he spring from his sleep, and, instant recollection returning, again endeavour to compose himself. He thought he heard a whispering of his name ; he listened, and was convinced that he was correct ; he felt something moving under him, and yet he was upon the floor. The whispering was renewed, directing him to remove the bed ; and he was rising to obey, when the sentinel opened the door to see if the prisoner was safe : he closed it again, and Blocks, with as little noise as possible, complied with the directions of his unknown visitant. All was darkness ;

but in another minute a hand was placed upon him, a glimmering light shot upwards, and he perceived a small trap-door opened to a very narrow flight of steps. 'Tis Hans,' whispered his companion ; 'follow in silence.'

At first the young Englishman felt undecided how to act. A heinous charge had been laid to his account, which he had not only repelled, but transferred to another ; and the following morning was to decide as to his innocence or guilt. Yet he was a prisoner, and must continue so even though he should be able to prove Dubois the murderer he was. Then there was the death of Tiercelin. Besides, with the sight of Hans there also came vivid recollections of Eugenia, and he longed to know her fate. The words of Du Fay likewise crossed his mind,—'You are in the midst of wolves.' The hopes of freedom and restoration to the service of his country filled his heart, and descending with as little noise as possible, he closed the trap-door above his head. Hans preceded him with the light, and, after winding through several contracted passages just wide enough to move in, sometimes rising up steps and at other times going down, creeping through low doorways, and removing obstructions that appeared as solid as the building, all of which had to be replaced, they at length stopped before what appeared to be a piece of substantial masonry attached to the foundation of the house ; but even this yielded to the strength of his guide : it swung on concealed hinges, and a rush of cold wind announced that they were emerging into the open air, and our hero passed out into a space at the back of the dwelling, where the wife of Hans was waiting to receive him with a thick, warm cloak, which was carefully wrapped about his person. Silence was still enjoined, and they quitted the place by a gate in the side wall, communicating with an obscure street in the rear, from whence they traversed a short distance, and at last stopped at a house upon the quay, close to a bridge, and near to the church of St. Nicholas. Hans knocked ; the door was opened by an elderly female ; the trio entered without a word, and Blocks was ushered into an apartment humble in its furniture, but still displaying a comfortable asylum to one who had suffered so much.

'And now, monsieur,' said Hans, assisting to disencumber our hero of his cloak, 'you are for the present safe.'

'And Eugenia,' inquired Blocks, 'where and how is she?—shall I not see her?'

Hans shook his head, and a deep-drawn sigh escaped him. 'I loved the maiden, monsieur,' said he ; 'she was to me as dear as my own child : everybody loved her.'

'For the sake of heaven's mercy, do not keep me in ignorance!' urged Ten-thousand, the agony of suspense forcing the perspiration from every pore. 'Tell me,—what has become of her?'

'No one can tell, monsieur,' responded Hans. 'Her father was seized and sent to prison by the order of that wretch who took possession of the house. Eugenia disappeared,—no one can give any account in what manner, except those who were instrumental in her removal, and they mock at all inquiries.'

This was indeed a heavy blow to the young man ; but he determined to inform Du Fay of the place of his concealment, and solicit his influence as well in behalf of the imprisoned burgomaster, as also to ascertain the fate of his daughter. 'I cannot remain here, good Hans,' said he, 'whilst it is probable Eugenia may be suffering indignity : I must, and will use my endeavours to discover where she is.'

'Alas, alas! monsieur,' exclaimed Hans mournfully, 'what can you, a stranger to our town—what can you do? I owe you a debt of gratitude, and therefore cannot consent that you should place yourself in peril, whilst you may be in safety.'

'It is useless to attempt dissuading me, Hans,' returned Blocks. 'It is true, I may do nothing ; but that is no reason that I should not try. Success or failure must rest upon the attempt, and not upon my remaining inactive : I cannot, I will not do it. She was my pleasant companion in many a sunny hour of delight ; and shall I basely sit down in self-security, whilst she may be exposed to danger? Never, Hans! never!'

'She probably may be safe,' said Hans, desirous of calming the young man's mind. 'Herr Vonestracht has many friends in Dort, and the maiden may have found refuge with them.'

'Would anything but death or confinement have restrained Eugenia from endeavours to rescue her father?' inquired Blocks. 'But tell me, Hans,—I know you were instrumental in removing them from the house—tell me how it was effected, and what became of them.'

'You saw me take the key, then?' said Hans. 'I looked upon it as a God-send, and whilst the deputation were departing, contrived to evade notice and release them from confinement. But alas! monsieur, though we passed the sentries at the great door and gained the street—nay, more, a few minutes would have placed them in comparative safety—yet it was not to be!—it was not to be!' and Hans wrung his hands in agony.

'How?—tell me, Hans! what prevented it?' asked Blocks, greatly agitated, and scarce able to restrain his tears.

'Herr Vonestracht was stubborn, monsieur, but yet he was right,' answered the Dutchman ; 'he would go to the Stadthouse, to claim protection for himself and child. I urged on him the precariousness of the aid he would demand —that already, the very individuals who had been foremost to welcome the French had suffered extensively from plunder ; that honour, honesty, and justice were set at nought, and the free will of lawless troops alone held the ascendency. "I will not be wanting in my duty, Hans," said he ; "I must, I will go and see the general-in-chief." I told him General Moreau had already departed for Rotterdam — that Laison had now the supreme control, and outrage, violence, and death, were spreading their terrors on every side, but more especially against the persons of those who were inimical to their conquerors ; a list had been prepared—spies

have been posted in the town, and he himself was marked out for destruction. "The more need, then, for me to raise my voice against such enormities!" said he. "At least, they shall find one burgher who has not betrayed his country."—But the maiden?' said I. The noble-minded girl answered—"My father's course must be mine—he cannot, will not do wrong, and I fear nothing whilst with him." We reached the Stadthouse: the whole front was occupied by troops, and the burgomasters who had been most urgent for yielding up the town were engaged in spreading tables and bringing in provisions, like menial servants, whilst soldiers were compelling them to unwonted expedition by blows and the point of the bayonet. "Base and degenerate men!" exclaimed Herr Vonestracht, "are ye the members of the council of Dort?" This taunt, monsieur, aroused them—not to resistance against their persecutors—not to a sense of honour; but to a determination to humble the pride of the burgomaster by bringing him to a level with themselves. Thus, those who have sunk in infamy, but are still sensible of shame, always try to drag down the high-minded, that there may be none superior to themselves "We work—why should not Herr Vonestracht!" was the universal cry, which was not lost upon the soldiers, and he was commanded to assist in preparing the repast. A flat refusal was the consequence, an officer came up and behaved rudely to Eugenia, but a heavy blow from the father laid the uncivil fellow prostrate; and I, who expected to see him instantly bayoneted by the ferocious-looking beings who surrounded him, was surprised by marks of approbation at his conduct. "It is his child." said one; "Nature prevails in all things," said another; some shouted, "To the gun! to the gun!" and a few came forward to seize him; but Eugenia stepped between—the hood of her cloak flew back and exposed her mild and beseeching eyes filled with tears—her hands were clasped together, and she exclaimed, "He is my father!—soldiers of France, would you injure him for resenting insult to his daughter?"'

'May the God of heaven bless her!' said Blocks, whilst deep sobs overcame him as he listened to the narration, which found relief in a flood of tears. 'Go on, Hans; what was the result?'

'A loud cheer resounded—cries of "Bravo!" and clapping of hands,' rejoined the man: 'but at this moment up rode Laison; the affair was explained to him—the burgomaster was sent to prison—I was hurried away amongst the crowd, and Eugenia disappeared.'

'Provide me a disguise, good Hans!' exclaimed our hero impatiently. 'I have friends amongst these invaders—men of noble mind and generous purpose.'

'I am well aware of it, monsieur,' returned his companion; 'but even they must yield to the general torrent that is carrying everything before it—the name of Englishman is an abomination. I was present in the room when you appeared before Bernadotte, and heard the observations of the soldiers around me. Your name was coupled with that of spy; nay, more, there was one who spoke of the mysterious disappearance of a colonel;' and Hans paused.

'Tiercelin?' said the alarmed Blocks inquiringly.

'Yes—that, I think, was the name,' responded Hans. 'And moreover, I ascertained that, by a plot of Laison's, you were to be sacrificed before you could appear in the morning for examination. Thank Heaven! you are now safe, my young friend; and you must remain in secret till I can bring you further intelligence.'

Blocks sat pondering upon every circumstance, and at length resolved to write to Du Fay. Materials were procured: he entered into particulars—implored him to interest St. Cyr in behalf of Vonestracht and Eugenia—declared his readiness to deliver himself up, should it be deemed requisite to the safety of his friends—and expressed a wish to see him, if it could be accomplished secretly. Hans received particular directions respecting the individual to whom he was to deliver it; he promised the utmost promptitude, and left our hero in a state of disquietude that surpasses description.

CHAPTER IX.

'All strange and terrible events are welcome,
But comforts we despise: our size of sorrow,
Proportioned to our cause, must be as great
As that which makes it.—How now? is he dead?'
SHAKESPEARE.

IT is an undeniable fact, that, in the occurrences of life, circumstances frequently arise which elicit powers both of mind and body that the individual manifesting them was himself unconscious of possessing. Many a man who has trembled at the bare thought of death, has yet met it firmly and without the slightest symptom of fear. Emergency has ever been the touchstone to talent, the spur to energy—it has made men of youths, heroes of men. Had Blocks remained quietly at the parsonage, he would probably have slumbered on without any material exigency to throw him upon his own resources; but, placed amidst danger, and difficulty, and distress, he felt matured in reason, determined in spirit, and resolute for action. All night did he remain revolving plans and schemes for his future guidance, alternately swayed by hope and apprehension, but never yielding to despair. When morning came, and day, hoodwinked by fogs, shed a dim twilight on the scene, he looked from the window of his apartment, and discovered he was near the place where, two days before, he had rescued the child of Hans from a watery grave. The snow was falling in thick flakes, there was a yellow tinge upon everything, and the whole presented a most dreary aspect, especially to one whose mind was already oppressed with gloomy forebodings. Troops were continually crossing the bridge in detached parties, regardless of weather, and disappearing in the dense mist which obscured all objects at a certain distance.

It was late before Hans returned; and then he brought the unpleasant tidings that General

Bernadotte and his suite (amongst whom was Du Fay) had proceeded to Rotterdam ; that General St. Cyr had returned to his command at Nimeguen, and Laison remained lord of the ascendant in Dort. Dubois had been liberated, and the murder of Gateaud alleged to have been perpetrated by the young Englishman. Herr Vonestracht remained in prison, but no tidings could be obtained of Eugenia.

'The path of duty is plainly open to me,' said Blocks in a determined tone ; 'Eugenia would never have deserted me, nor will I abandon her. The disguise. Hans !—you must procure me the disguise—something connected with the French army ; I must, indeed I must, investigate for myself—an officer's undress suit, with an overall. Here is money, Hans; only get me what I ask.'

The generous Dutchman was so touched by the distress of the youth, that he promised compliance ; and that evening our hero was furnished with a dress which, when his features were darkened by a preparation obtained through the means of the woman of the house, bade fair, as he trusted, to defy detection. Thus equipped, he sallied forth, followed at a short distance by Hans ; but wandering about through deserted streets, he at length requested Hans to take the lead, and conduct him to the Stadthouse. Thither they went; and the first thing that attracted their notice, was a lofty gibbet, erected in a central position near the front ; but all was dark and gloomy about the building. The sentries were pacing to and fro upon their posts—some of the guard were passing in and out ; an officer occasionally spoke to them, but there were no signs of anything of importance going on.

Observing that they had attracted attention, our hero and his companion moved away ; and Blocks was communicating his intention of going into the neighbourhood of the burgomaster's house, when they were accosted by the piquet, and not being able to give satisfactory replies, were taken into custody, and compelled to go the rounds with their captors. It was not long before they fell in with the schipper of a schuyt. who had been indulging rather too freely in potations to Equality and Liberty and had acquired that sort of hardihood that has been not inappropriately called Dutch courage.

'Donder and blixam !' said the unwieldy schipper, poising himself unsteadily ; 'I shall drink with my good friends the French,' and he endeavoured to stop the sergeant by catching hold of his arm ; but the latter readily, and even good-humouredly, disengaged himself, which so aroused the anger of the Dutchman, that he rattled out several opprobrious epithets, and challenged the whole guard to *single* combat. This, so far from displeasing the Frenchmen, or exciting their anger, produced loud fits of laughter : and, indeed, our hero himself could not refrain. The schipper was an extremely bulky man, with a low-crowned, broad-brimmed hat, from which peered forth a red, round face, with eyes as heavy and stolid as a cod's after a week's stowage, and with a similar red ring round the pupil ; he wore a close jacket covered with ample buttons, and breeches that would have supplied a detachment of horse artillery his blue hose were well darned, and his wooden shoes were impervious to water ; and as he stood defying the piquet, he offered an admirable burlesque to Ajax defying the lightning.

The laughter with which he was greeted moved his corpulency to greater deeds, and, flourishing an enormous pair of fists, he advanced to the attack. One of the guard stepped out and presented his firelock, but was prevented by the sergeant from firing ; another pricked him slightly with the bayonet, but it seemed only to give a fresh stimulus to his valour.

'Will you drink with me?' exclaimed the borachio, getting more and more unsteady in his motions, and now nearly surrounded by French soldiers off duty, who eagerly joined in anything that promised them sport. They were near a square stone case that covered a well, the flat top of which was elevated about four feet from the ground : this was enveloped in a thick coat of snow at least eighteen inches in depth.

'A god—a god !' shouted the serjeant ; "he shall be the Dutch god of Liberty. What say you, comrades? Yonder stands the pedestal—let us mount him and do homage !'

The soldiers immediately smoked the humour of the sergeant, and several of the stoutest amongst them shouldered the unfortunate schipper to the well, where they hoisted him up and squatted his broad stern down in the snow. The Dutchman did not appear to accommodate himself very comfortably to his cushion ; but the persecutors he had provoked had not yet done with him ; buckets of water were procured from the neighbouring houses, and whilst they constrained him to keep his place, the liquid was poured down about his breech, and, as the frost was intense, the skipper was soon as firmly fixed as if he had actually been a statue. Liquor was brought and plentifully supplied to him ; whilst the soldiers hailed him as the elephant of Liberty, and copious libations were swallowed amidst loud 'vivas,' in which the Dutchman heartily joined.

In the height of their merriment, a shrill voice ascended outside the circle, which had a wonderful effect upon the schipper ; his face became elongated—there was a comical expression of dolorous alarm ; and the next minute, his counterpart, in petticoats, bustled through the throng with an enormous wooden ladle in her hand. The soldiers, probably suspecting that this was the Dutch goddess of Liberty, immediately made way for her and enlarged their circle.

'You drunken brute !' exclaimed the virago, sacrilegiously assaulting the newly-throned deity with her ladle; 'I'll teach you to waste your substance in debauchery and intemperance ! Come down from that and hurry home, or I will not leave you a whole bone in your skin ;' and down came the ladle again.

The courage of the Dutchman was gone—he offered no resistance to the battery of his spouse, but sat completely dumbfoundered, whilst she rattled her ladle about his shoulders and head, to the excessive delight and noisy applause of the Frenchmen. But mynheer could not move.

nis nether garment was frozen too fast for him to escape, and giving his *lady* a most imploring look, he requested her forbearance, and offered her a share of his schnaps. This brought his punishment down heavier; and other women coming up to increase the confusion as well as the blows, the unfortunate schipper, finding all attempts to disengage himself utterly futile, cast off his holdfasts, and by one desperate effort sprang from his pedestal, leaving the breeches behind him. But, alas! his flannel drawers and the tail of his shirt had also become saturated, and adhered most fondly to the garment which had so often sheltered them; they were rent away in the descent, and the Mars of Liberty, rolling along in the pride of scheidam, presented an enormous shield to the public gaze, his Venus not unfrequently trying its temper with her everlasting ladle.

Shout succeeded shout as they moved onward. The idle soldiery followed to continue the amusement, whilst the picket-guard pursued its duty. Our hero augured favourably of the disposition of the sergeant, and determined to embrace an opportunity of courting his good graces, so as to be suffered to go at large. In a by-street they came up with two men who evidently wished to escape; but they seemed to be well aware that the slightest attempt would bring a volley upon them, and therefore they boldly halted for the guard to come up.

'Who and what are you?' inquired the sergeant, roughly seizing them, and placing a soldier on each side.

'We are honest townsmen,' answered one of the men, 'returning home peaceably from our occupation in the manufacture of linen.'

'Do you use these for shuttles?' asked the sergeant, pulling from underneath the fellow's thick coat a horseman's pistol.

'These are perilous times,' returned the man, without hesitation. 'I am only armed in self-defence.'

'You have just been engaged, then?' said the sergeant, inspecting the weapon; 'this pistol has only just now been discharged; and,' pulling from the Dutchman's breast a massive gold chain, 'is this a portion of your warp, or is it a part of your self-defence?'

The man, by no means intimidated, answered, 'The property is my own; and can you blame me if I endeavour to secure it?'

'By no means my friend,' responded the sergeant; 'I am not disposed to blame you—a little explanation is all I require;' and turning to the other man, 'Have you also pistols and chains? Come, both of you, deliver up, and spare us the inconvenience and trouble of a search.'

The men were at first doggedly silent and motionless; but a slap of the sabre seemed to produce its effects, and they were about to disburthen themselves, when a young female, with her hair dishevelled and a look of frantic terror, came up, and, shrieking, cried, 'Those are the men! they are the murderers!'

'How now, pretty one?' said the sergeant soothingly, as he took the hand of the agitated girl; 'which are the men you speak of, and what is their offence?'

'Those are the wretches!' returned she, pointing to the two captives; 'they've the plunder yet about them.'

'Surely you must mistake,' responded the sergeant; 'these are two honest manufacturers of linen. How, prisoners, is it not so?'

The men made no reply, but looked to the right and left, as if contemplating the risking of life on the chance of the moment to start away.

'Yes, it is true,' returned the female; 'they were in the employ of my father, and this afternoon have robbed and murdered him. Soldiers of France! protect me and do justice on these villains.'

'This, then, is your self-defence,' uttered the sergeant; 'and this is the property,' holding out the chain, 'which you wished to secure?'

'Oh, no, no!' shrieked the girl, catching at the golden links; 'it was my father's! See, there is blood upon it now! Come with me, soldiers; I am a lone orphan, and demand your justice on the murderers.'

'And you shall have it, too,' asserted the sergeant, sternly. 'Bring them along.'

It was but the turn of the next street, and they entered a large house, where, in one of the lower apartments, lay the corpse of an elderly man extended on the floor, and several children were on their knees over it or prostrate by its side, giving vent to bitter lamentations. The prisoners looked upon the spectacle with indifference, as if aware that their fate was sealed, and they resolved to meet it unflinchingly. The children raised their heads and shrieked fearfully when they saw the murderers so close to them; but they were now fettered, and could offer no resistance.

'There lies your victim, then,' said the sergeant reproachfully; 'a countryman too—the man by whom you gained your daily bread!'

'And what if we have perpetrated that which you consider so heinous an offence?' said the man who had been first addressed. 'Have we not been taught the lesson by the massacres of Paris and Lyons, and Tournay? He was an aristocrat, haughty and tyrannical, obtaining his wealth by the sweat of our brow; whilst we ate the bread of toil and carefulness, he enjoyed the luxuries of life.'

Here he was interrupted by the entrance of several fellow-workmen, who shed tears and uttered many expressions of deep sorrow over their fallen master, whilst they vehemently upbraided the villains who had deprived him of existence.

'Wilheim,' said one, 'did he not provide for you in distress, when you must have perished but for his help? Hermann, he treated you as his child, and now your hands are red with his blood.'

'We but followed the example of the citizens of Paris,' replied Wilheim, whilst his less obdurate companion stood mute. 'Liberty and equality, say I; and, citizen soldiers, I look to you for both.'

'They shall be yours,' returned the sergeant. 'Cast loose their bonds.' The men were in-

stantly released from the fetters that had been clapped upon their hands, and they loudly shouted, 'Vive les Français!—Liberty and equality for ever!'

The sergeant addressed four of his men in an undertone; and they instantly presented their firelocks at the murderers, who retreated to the extremity of the apartment.

'How, what is this?' exclaimed the man who had spoken first. 'We are now citizens of France, claiming——'

'Liberty and equality,' answered the sergeant, 'and I will not forfeit my word. The liberty you gave your victim you now enjoy; and the equality with him you shall instantly have—Fire!'

A rattling discharge of musketry filled the room with smoke; but before it spread, the wretches had fallen to the ground—their hours were numbered. The children shrieked, the young female gazed with horror on the dead, whilst the workmen acknowledged the retributive act was just.

'Remove those carcases,' said the sergeant to the manufacturers; and then, turning to the female, he added, in tones of softened humanity, 'Justice is stern, young lady; that which you demanded has been executed. Have you no mother?'

'None!—no parent now,' replied she convulsively. 'I and these you see are orphans—unprotected orphans!—Oh, my father, my father!' and she wildly wrung her hands.

'Pierre Dabout!' called the sergeant; and a soldier stepped from the ranks. 'You have children amongst the vines of the Garonne; you must feel as a parent! Remain with this afflicted family till my return, and see that they come to neither injury nor dishonour.' He turned round —'Marchez, camarades!' and the guard quitted the house.

There was something so extremely romantic in all this, that, in despite of the summary execution which he had witnessed, Blocks could not but admire the chivalrous conduct of the sergeant, and he tried to get to speak to him, but could not accomplish it. During the period of the spectacle recorded, Hans and the young Englishman were kept in the rear, and not allowed to advance; and they were still restrained by their escort from approaching the leader of the party. They held but little communication together, but they could not forbear expressing their admiration of the sergeant.

'He is a noble and brave fellow,' said their more immediate guard; 'mais, he is not one of the canaille. Junôt will win his commission before long, and his comrades will rejoice to see it.'

'Will he deem it an absolute part of his duty to take us to the main-guard?' demanded our hero.

'It is not for me to judge,' replied the Frenchman. 'I am here only to obey.'

'Could you not speak to him, my friend?' inquired Blocks. 'We were not taken in any affray, are perfectly willing to give every account of ourselves, and as he appears a just man, certainly cannot desire to detain us without a cause.'

'I will readily speak to him,' returned the man; 'and I am sure he will give you a decisive answer one way or the other.' He called out, 'Citizen sergeant, the prisoners have something to say to you.'

'Say on,' commanded the individual addressed, and dropping into the rear—'I am ready to hear you.'

'It is growing late,' said Hans. 'My wife will be alarmed at my absence, and it will cause her deep distress. I am prepared to give every account of myself. Is it positively requisite that I should go the rounds with you, and remain in custody, for which others are suffering pain?'

'Jacques Petit!' shouted the sergeant; and one of the guard immediately quitted the ranks. 'Accompany this man to his residence; see that his statements are all correct. Should he swerve and refuse to return with you, in case of falsehood you know your duty. Dutchman, are you content?'

'For myself I am,' replied Hans; 'but my young comrade?'

'Must remain with me,' answered the sergeant; and Blocks gave the other a look of meaning not to press the matter, as he saw from the decisive manner of the man that his determination was made, and nothing would alter it; any urgency therefore would probably have rendered him suspicious.

'I am quite satisfied to go with the guard,' said Blocks; 'the sergeant is too honourable a man to contemplate my injury; and as I have nothing to fear, you will see me before long. Adieu, mon ami!'

They parted: the sergeant resumed his station; but in a short time, under pretence of speaking to a corporal in the rear, he again walked by the side of our hero.

'Monsieur is in the service of the Republic,' said he in an under tone; 'to what department may he belong?'

'I have seen so much of the nobleness of your nature,' answered Blocks, in a similar subdued tone, 'that I will not attempt to deceive you.'

'You have determined wisely,' said the sergeant, 'nor shall I ask you any more questions. The saviour of St. Cyr, the friend of Du Fay, the destroyer of Tiercelin, need be under no apprehensions from Sergeant Junôt. You are safe with me — but keep your own counsel.' He then added in a loud voice as he again left him: 'Eh bien, mon ami, you are right, justice should be immutable.'

Whilst the sergeant was uttering this, he never turned his head, but kept looking straight before him, as if in ordinary conversation. Nothing could exceed the astonishment of Blocks, not only that he should be so readily recognised, but also that the individual who had addressed him should have such perfect knowledge of the transaction with Tiercelin; and for several minutes he cherished doubts whether the sergeant did not purpose to betray him—why otherwise should he detain him a prisoner? The rounds were traversed—they reached the main-guard; the sergeant made his report to the officer, gave a slight but satisfactory account of our hero, and then requested permission for one hour's absence to

attend to some private business ;—it was readily granted.

'Allons donc, mon ami!' exclaimed the sergeant to Blocks ; and taking him by the arm, they set out together in a rapid walk. 'Fold this pelisse about you,' said Junôt, 'that attempt at uniform is enough to betray you in an instant to a well-practised eye. Where are your quarters, and what are you doing with the army? I understood you were destined for the marine.'

'Where my quarters are,' returned Blocks, 'I really cannot tell you : all I know is, that they are upon a quay near a church, and looking out upon a bridge. With respect to my being with the army——'

Before he had time to conclude the sentence, they had turned into the space in front of the Stadthouse ; and upon the gibbet hung suspended a stout-looking man, who had been recently executed. This was a spectacle that Blocks had never witnessed before, and it made him shudder. The corpulent body was swinging to and fro in the wind, and twisting round in its eddies ; the sideward inclination of the head, the hands still clutched together, and the tension of the ropes which secured the arms, showed that the struggle, though probably brief, had nevertheless been violent. The white hair was streaming in the breeze, and the face was uncovered, except a handkerchief which bound the eyes. The investigation of these particulars did not occupy more time than it has taken to describe them, and both Blocks and his companion had come to a halt.

'Sacré!' exclaimed the sergeant through his clenched teeth, either at the moment unconscious of or indifferent to the presence of a witness,—'the deed has then been perpetrated, and the monster has kept his word. Brave you may be, Laison, but hell will lose its due if you escape it. Poor old man!'

'Do you know, then, who the unfortunate is?' inquired Blocks as they moved on, and approached nearer to the gibbet ; 'the dress seems to be above the common order.'

'You are right, my friend,' responded the sergeant, increasing his pace with his irritation. 'Look earnestly; do you not know those features? Those features!—no, they are too much swollen to be easily recognised.'

A sickly sensation crept over the young man's heart as he stopped and earnestly gazed ; but he had no remembrance of seeing the face before. 'I did not know the person,' said Blocks.

There were but few spectators of that awful scene; the soldiers were too much accustomed to such exhibitions to heed them, and the townspeople fled from it in dismay.

'It is an infernal act,' said the sergeant. 'I would not have it on my soul for an empire. Come, mon ami—dépêchez.'

At this moment a wild and fearful shriek rose in the air, from the opposite side of the space. It was a female voice, so thrilling, so acutely piercing to the ear, that every eye was drawn towards the spot, where a young lady, whose clothes were rent, and whose long hair hung down her back, stood looking up at the agitated corpse ;—her face was blanched, her eyes were ready to burst from their sockets. But in a moment the young midshipman responded to the cry by a yell of unutterable anguish, for it was Eugenia that he beheld, and the whole truth instantly flashed upon his mind. For an instant or two they gazed at one another as if every faculty was paralysed, then they rushed into each other's arms ; she laid her head upon his breast, hid her face in the folds of the pelisse, then again raising herself, she gave him a look of heavenly sweetness—a smile grew upon her cheek, there was a blissful meaning in her eye as she uttered, 'Now, now, I die happy!' The look became fixed, her hold relaxed, and when the sergeant advanced by the side of his companion, he was sustaining the lifeless form of the being he had so fondly loved ;—the spirit of Eugenia had followed that of her father, and both had expired nearly on the same spot.

'Where am I?' exclaimed our hero in English, awakening from what appeared to him a long and heavy slumber. He stared earnestly around him, and ascertained that he was extended on one of a number of small beds, in a room resembling the ward of an hospital ; but the incessant rattling of chains, and a combination of unnatural noises forbade the idea that the place was a receptacle for the sick. 'Where am I?' reiterated he still louder ; but no one answered to his inquiry. Several men were walking about, others were in their beds ; some were loudly laughing without any apparent cause, others were declaiming ; two or three sat huddled together apart from the rest, and muttering to themselves ; whilst every now and then the most horrible howlings rang through the building. 'Oh, this is dreadful!' uttered Blocks, 'will no one tell me what all this means?'

'Thou divine essence!' said, in French, a poor tattered wretch, who respectfully approached the bedside and knelt down, 'if thou wilt be pleased to reveal thy will in language suited to our mortal ears, the subjects of thy empire are ready to obey. What wouldst thou?'

'What are these—and where am I?' inquired Blocks, in the same language in which he had been addressed.

'Thou dost but try thy servant,' answered the man. 'Are not all things known to thee!—thou knowest that this is the temple of the gods, and I their unworthy but zealous high-priest. There stalks Jupiter with his golden throne,' pointing to a remarkably tall and noble-looking man, who was striding to and fro with a three-legged stool under his arm, and some dirty straw in his hand: 'his thunders are quiescent, his lightnings are quenched in moist kisses from the lips of Venus. There, too, is Mars,' directing our hero's attention to a squat figure whom he instantly recognised as the Dutch schipper that had afforded so much amusement to the piquet-guard ; he was seated on a box, with an empty jug in his hand, from which he almost unremittingly went through the motions of drinking. 'See,' continued the man, 'he is quaffing nectar, and assuaging his

burning desire for war by intoxicating draughts of love.'

The man went on, but wholly disregarded by Ten-thousand, for the sight of the Dutchman had operated upon his train of thought and brought the past like an overwhelming flood upon his mind; — he uttered the name of Eugenia, and sank back upon his bed.

'Come hither, priest,' exclaimed Jupiter; 'what art thou doing there?' and the man who had been addressing our hero humbly crouched at the feet of the person who called him. 'Are not we supreme in power—is not our kingly authority over gods and mortals?'

'Dread monarch, thou art more!' replied the high-priest. 'Thou controllest the universe, and givest the days and nights their bounds; through thee the gorgeous planets roll on their glittering cars—the sun is to thee a breast-plate, and the moon a fair pearl in thy diadem.'

'We are supreme, then, having all things at our disposal,' said the other, proudly.

The high-priest made sundry motions with his arms in the air, bent down his head to the ground and uttered, 'Omnipotent thou art!'

'Then stew me a couple of buffaloes, and ask Mars to dinner!' was the response.

The high-priest obeyed, and bent one knee before the Dutch schipper, who loudly exclaimed, 'Donder and blixam!' and stretched the unfortunate fellow on his back. Jupiter, enraged to see his emissary so roughly handled, hurled his three-legged stool at the aggressor; and had the blow been received upon the head instead of the stomach, a fractured skull and a loss of life must have been the consequence; as it was, there was only a fractured jug, and some rather serious deprivation of wind.

'Hear me, ye mortals—grovelling worms upon the earth!' thundered forth the tall representative of Jupiter; 'hear me, ye gods! Have I not proclaimed Liberty and Equality? and will you dare to treat my apostle with contumely and blows! Are we not all upon a level, and will you have the effrontery and hardihood to deny me honour?' The Dutchman began to recover. 'Is not slavery abolished, and every one commanded to wait upon themselves? Mars, bring me my throne!'

'Take it!' said the schipper; and, with a 'Donder and blixam!' he sent it back pretty much the way that it came. Jupiter, however, bobbed out of the way, and the missile flew with no small degree of velocity against an unfortunate that was crouching in bed and manifesting the most fearful alarm whenever anyone approached his pallet.

'Oh, mon Dieu!—peste,—diable!' said he, apparently in extreme agony. 'I am done for,—dashed to pieces!—my delft legs and glass thighs are shattered to atoms! Mon Dieu! mon Dieu!'

'God of mercy!' uttered Blocks; 'this is indeed dreadful! I am amongst madmen.'

And such was the fact. Bereft of reason from the moment of Eugenia's death, the sergeant had conveyed him to the residence of Hans. Colonel du Fay was informed of the circumstance; the young Englishman was declared a prisoner of war under certain serious charges, and finding that all efforts to restore rationality failed, he was consigned to the receptacle for lunatics at Rotterdam, and recovered his intellects as suddenly as he had been seized. Revolting to the heart as his situation was, he nevertheless determined for a short time to preserve the semblance of derangement, that he might the better discover his position and ascertain what chance there was of escape.

The riot that took place in consequence of the fracas between Jupiter and Mars, each having his partisans, brought in two or three attendants: the king of the gods was put in the stocks, and the head of the warriors consigned to a dark dungeon, which if a man was not already mad was enough to make him so; indeed, terror and coercion seemed to be the only means employed to keep the refractory in order.

When the medical attendants came round, the patients were universally quiet and orderly, except one outrageous fellow, who insisted upon it that he was perfectly sane, but whom the doctors detained, for the purpose of making experiments upon him. Blocks was pronounced much better, although he practised deception, and orders were given to remove him to another room. This was soon afterwards carried into effect, and he found himself in a more comfortable apartment, where there were fewer inmates; and he enjoyed the gloomy satisfaction of finding a countryman, who was rapidly recovering, in the person of an officer of the army, who had been placed there by his colonel previous to the surrender of the town to the French.

It was approaching towards dark hour when Blocks so mercifully recovered his reason, and darkness had closed in when the change was effected. He awoke greatly refreshed the following morning, and was gratified to see the sun shining in its glory and to hear the melodious song of the birds amongst the trees. He dressed himself, and was permitted to descend to the garden. Here he found Mr. Edmonds, the officer mentioned; and though they were narrowly watched by the eye, they contrived to get out of ear-shot and conversed freely together on various topics, and Blocks ascertained that he had been rather more than five months immured within that abode of misery. The garden was laid out and kept in the beautiful order for which the Dutch are famed; the flowers were in their full perfection, breathing odours: there was a cheering warmth in the sun, and everything was tranquil. The companions entered a small pavilion in the centre of the grounds, and after a few preliminary remarks, Mr. Edmonds inquired the future intentions of our hero.

'I have not yet decided,' answered Blocks; 'are you on your parole?'

'A question such as you have just now put is hardly requisite in a place like this,' rejoined the other; 'what is a madman's word of honour?'

'True, true,' returned Blocks, somewhat cautioned by the rolling of his companion's eye.

'I did not think of that. But should you not like to get to England?'

'Undoubtedly,' replied Edmonds, more composed; 'only show me the way to accomplish it, and——'

Here they were interrupted by the near approach of two very genteelly-dressed men, both of whom were speaking rapidly in French. They did not enter the pavilion, but stopped near a bed of flowers close to it.

'Attend, monsieur,' said one of them; 'do not let us waste time on childish argument, but come to facts—ay, facts, for they are easily demonstrated and will not admit of contradiction.'

'It is Monsieur Jacquemont,' whispered Edmonds, 'a celebrated French atheist, who came here with the Army of the Rhine: his companion is a learned German doctor of the Protestant Church, whose intense application to theological studies has undermined his intellect. We shall obtain both amusement and information from their discourse.'

'Facts, as you say,' returned the doctor,—'facts are indeed the unmalleable diamonds that resist assertion and illumine argument. But, sir, you cannot bring forward a single fact to prove that there was no great First Cause in the creation of all things.'

'Which, then, was first created—the seed or the flower, the egg or the chick?' said the atheist sneeringly.

'Will you admit that either has been created?' asked the doctor mildly.

'And what if I do?' returned the atheist; 'I cannot see that one way or the other it mends or mars your case.'

'I'll erect my structure on it,' said the doctor; 'it shall be to me the foundation of a building sacred to Jehovah. You admit it, then?'

'Why, that would be at once to cast away the theory of years,' returned the other. 'I have studied human nature—I have waded through the depths of science, and cannot discover that superintending Power that you worship: all things seem to me to be guided by mere chance.'

'Chance is the idol of fools,' returned the doctor harshly; but immediately correcting his impetuosity, he said, 'Pardon me, monsieur, for departing from the rules of courtesy; but I serve a precise Master, and it angers me in my human feelings when I hear men of sense and men of talent denying the attributes of the Omniscient, and tracing out with their fingers gods in the air.'

'We have met for discussion, my friend, and the morning is peculiarly favourable,' responded the Frenchman in a tone of gentlemanly conciliation. 'Come, then, let our controversy begin; for as light is to the eyes, so are the words of wisdom to the understanding.'

'You will, then, neither admit nor deny a Creator,' said the doctor. 'Take your position, monsieur, and commence.'

The atheist stooped and gathered a flower. 'Look at this lovely emanation from the earth: it springs spontaneously,—the rains nourish its roots, the sun warms it into being,—it revels in the joyous smiles of summer, it shrinks and dies beneath the cold frown of winter.' He paused.

'And it propagates its species,' added the doctor. 'You may dilate for hours on such a topic, and I should listen to you with pleasure, because it leads us back to Infinite Knowledge and Eternal Wisdom. Now, sir, I ask *you*, from whence or how did the first of these flowers spring into existence? You call them emanations from the earth: I call them bounteous gifts of the Deity. Of what use are they to the subsistence of men, or birds, or animals? None: they are ornaments which adorn the works of the Creator, to manifest his skill, his goodness, and his power. Are we at issue as to their origin, or do you persist that they owe it to mere chance? You spoke just now of the seed and the flower, the chick and the egg: will you admit, or not, that either the one or the other has been created?'

'Suppose I do, my friend,' rejoined the Frenchman, 'and for the sake of argument I will—what then?'

'Is there more difficulty in creating the seed than there is in forming the flower?' responded the doctor. 'If you admit that either has been created, you also admit the powers of creation, which is all I require; for surely a man of sense will never contend that the power which created one could not create the other.'

'It is a mystery,' uttered the Frenchman. 'But look at man; you talk of an overruling Providence in his affairs, and yet we see the innocent suffer with the guilty; we see honest worth in rags, and villainy in high places; we see priestcraft usurping dominion, yet inculcating humility—preaching the principles of peace, yet sending the bloody sword through the land—talking of sackcloth and ashes, yet wearing purple and fine linen. If an accident occurs in which some are lost and others are saved, you bless Providence for the latter, whilst the same Providence must also have effected the former.'

'True, monsieur,' returned the German, 'let us be grateful for mercy whilst we bend to the stroke of punishment. It is most true that we daily witness the occurrences you have enumerated—ay, and more—many more may be added to the catalogue. But what then? this life is but a probationary stage to eternity; here we meet with afflictions and trials in the flesh—mind, in the flesh—that we may rest on the sure and certain hope that is held out of eternal life, and immortality hereafter. You talk of this world as if it was *here* the Christian expected his reward! The body dies and is united with its kindred dust—the soul remains alive to experience everlasting misery or bliss; which, then, should be our aim—to pamper our appetites and seek for indulgences to gratify the perishing dust, or to lay up for our souls a treasure that can never diminish—a crown of glory that can never become dim, eternal in the heavens?' and the divine raised his hand towards the bright canopy that was spread above their heads.

'Your heaven is there, then,' said the Frenchman, imitating the action of the German. 'But do you not know that we are flying through im-

measurable space—that where your finger pointed one minute, thousands of miles have intervened in the next? What is it that you pointed at? the blue ethereal vault—the boundary of sight, and yet you called it heaven! Where, then, is your place of torment?'

'Heaven is the pious confidence of the Christian here—the certainty of salvation hereafter. Hell is the despair of the guilty whilst on earth—the conviction of eternal punishment in the world to come,' answered the divine. 'I know in whom I have believed, and I will not cease to trust Him though he slay me.'

'I cannot fathom it,' returned the Frenchman; 'for even by your own showing you must allow the God you worship is not a God of justice. Men call me infidel, unbeliever, atheist; I am so from conviction, from study, from the light that is burning within me. Could I be made sensible that there was such a being as Him you profess to worship, he should have my undivided adoration; yet you say that this great First Cause, knowing that my heart is honest, will punish me for that very honesty.'

'And justly too,' answered the divine. 'You have read and studied the book of Nature, which ought to have led you to the book of Revelation. If in adhering to the one you despise the other, the fault of condemnation is your own.'

'Stop, stop!' exclaimed the Frenchman impatiently. 'You talk of two books—the book of Nature and the book of Revelation; ay, I begin to comprehend.'

'You! you begin to comprehend!' responded the German loudly and angrily. 'What can you comprehend of the matter?—infidel! atheist! unbeliever! fool!'

'Stop, stop! in mercy stop!' uttered the Frenchman imploringly, and pressing the open palms of his hands to his brows. 'I see it all now. You talked of two books—one I had studied, and one I had not. True, true, 'tis all plain now: I want two heads!'

'You want two heads!' bellowed the doctor; 'you scum of Judaism, and worse!—you want two heads! Why, you haven't brains enough to fill one! Take that for your folly!' and the sound of a severe blow was heard.

'The fit is on them,' said Edmonds; 'we must part them instantly;' and they hurried from the pavilion.

The doctor had levelled his opponent to the earth, and, being a powerful man, it was with much difficulty that the keepers were enabled to secure him, and both were conveyed to their apartments raving. But the lesson was not lost upon either of the Englishmen; and, happily, it tended rather to strengthen their minds in humble dependence upon Providence than to produce any recurrence of the malady.

Blocks and his newly-found friend daily recovered strength, and as the time was approaching in which they expected to be transferred to their parole, many plans were adopted to effect their escape; but the only practicable one seemed to be over the garden wall; still, it was too lofty to attempt to scale in their yet weak state, and sickening apprehension daily grew upon them. Sentinels were posted in the front of the building, the keepers were constantly on the alert, and hope every hour grew fainter and fainter. At length they were declared cured, and were ordered to appear before the town-major. Gendarmes waited for them at the entrance, and, escorted by a guard, they proceeded to the house appointed, where they were made to stand for nearly an hour in the ante-room during the great man's pleasure. At the expiration of that time, they were ushered into an apartment, half parlour, half office, combining luxury with business, and Blocks found himself in the presence of the traitor and assassin Dubois. A convulsive spasm shook his frame as he saw the wretch recognised him, and a dark scowl passed over his features.

'My fate is inevitably sealed,' thought Blocks.

'You are both Englishmen,' said Dubois, 'English officers, and prisoners to the French Republic. You are to proceed to Valenciennes, where you will be indulged with liberty on your parole. Till then I must consign you to a place of security. Who waits there? Send Citizen Schneider here.'

A sergeant of gendarmes entered, and, to increase the surprise and embarrassment of poor Blocks, the individual arrayed in the national costume was none other than his old acquaintance Hans. The man unhesitatingly stepped up to him and held out his hand, which our hero, under all circumstances, did not think fit to decline, as it might have brought down vindictiveness upon his companion as well as upon himself; but there was no friendly pressure, and Dubois seemed to enjoy the confusion which was pictured in the young man's countenance.

'Citizen Schneider,' said the traitor, 'you will take these English prisoners under your special charge. Convey them to the prison of your department; see that they are well treated and are forthcoming in the morning.' He bowed, and they withdrew.

'Wonders will never cease with me, Hans!' said Blocks, as they walked along. 'But I have no right to question you: your will is your own, and you are certainly not accountable to me for your acts. Yet I did hope you had a patriot's heart.'

'And still have,' returned Hans, 'however harshly you may judge of me. My benefactor's property was confiscated, my office was taken from me, and I, with my faithful Marie and her children, was cast desolate upon the world to perish. No one dared to give me employ; my money was spent, hunger assailed us. Major Dubois sent for me, offered me the situation as keeper of a prison and overlooker of a district, with the nominal rank of sergeant. I hesitated, for I thought upon the past. He pressed it on me; and what reason did he urge for doing so?—as a recompense for my attention to you. He spoke of you in terms of great respect.'

'Of me?' exclaimed Blocks, doubtingly; 'the thing is impossible! Hans, you must be labouring under some mistake.'

'There is no mistake, sir,' responded the

Dutchman; 'I am telling you the truth. It is he who has supplied all your wants, whilst you were unconscious of all that was passing around you; and rest assured that by sending you with me, no evil, but rather good, is intended. Whatever he has been or still remains, I will give the devil his due.'

'This is certainly most mysterious, Hans!' said the young midshipman, still doubtingly: 'I cannot conceive his motive. But did his mention of my name induce you to accept the office?'

'It removed some scruples,' answered the official: 'but when I considered that if I did not take it, there was more than a probability of its passing into the hands of a Frenchman who would have but small mercy on my unfortunate countrymen, I saw there would be a point of duty in yielding, and I have not yet regretted doing so. I must conduct you to the prison, for I am true to the letter in obeying orders; but you will not long remain there.'

'And—and I would ask you of other things, Hans,' said our hero mournfully, and looking him full in the face.

'Their bodies were both buried in the same grave,' answered the official, dashing a tear away from his eye. 'Their souls are safe from sin, and care, and sorrow!'

'Enough, good Hans,' said our hero, as they halted before a handsome house. 'But why do we stop here? this is surely not the prison?'

'No, no!' replied Hans; 'this is at present my home. You must need refreshment: besides, Marie would scold if I were to pass by with the brave young Englishman and not call. Enter, gentlemen, enter.'

The door was thrown open, and they went in.

'You must excuse my monopoly of the conversation, Mr. Edmonds,' said our hero. 'Hans and his wife and I are old—ay, and I may add, tried acquaintances: they have been my friends when all the world has failed.'

'Make no apologies, my friend,' uttered Edmonds; 'indeed, I ought to rejoice that we have been thus thrown together, as I fear I should have met with but rough usage otherwise.'

Marie appeared with her child in her arms. She wept and smiled alternately; and the kind-hearted, grateful creature set before them a plentiful repast. They conversed on days that were gone: it was a mournful tribute to the memory of those whom they all had loved.

'And now, Hans,' inquired Marie, 'what are you going to do with them? I have plenty of room here.'

Hans shook his head.

'They have a little further to go, my dear, preparatory to a longer journey. But I fancy—yet I dare not express my thoughts to you.'

'There is one thing—but I dare say there are many things—that I have forgot,' said Blocks. 'The sergeant of the picket-guard, Hans, did you ever see him again?'

'Oh, yes!' replied the official, 'repeatedly. He obtained his commission before he quitted Dort, and married the daughter of the man whose murder he so promptly punished. There was money in the family, but he would not touch a stiver, leaving the whole to the orphans, on account of his having deprived them of their eldest sister. But now, gentlemen, we will, if you please, move on, lest the major should get there before us.'

The young Englishman took an affectionate leave of Marie, kissed the child, and then followed their conductor to the temporary prison of the district, where a comfortable apartment was assigned them, distinct from the other prisoners. Dubois, however, did not come; and that night they were conveyed on board a schuyt which was to carry them to the Briel, and thence they were to be forwarded by escort across the islands to the Scheldt, and from Antwerp to proceed by land to Valenciennes. Two gendarmes were appointed to go with them in the schuyt, but at the hour of sailing they had not embarked. Hans resigned his charge to the schipper, and at daylight the following morning they were under sail, with a rattling ebb tide running down the Maese. Why so little caution was used with the two Englishmen cannot at the present moment be explained: there were four stout Dutchmen to two weak Englishmen, and perhaps that was deemed sufficient security for their not running away.

At last the German ocean opened to their view, and our hero beheld a British frigate lying about two or three miles off from the Hook of Holland: the schuyt brought up, and two of the Dutchmen went ashore in the little boat, leaving the schipper and his son aboard. The old man had behaved kindly to Blocks and Edmonds; yet liberty was liberty—and what will not men attempt to gain it? A few words passed between the confederates, and they separated. The boat was sculling back with one man in it, when the schipper's son descended the fore peak, and instantly it was covered over by Blocks and secured: the father came forward, and lifted the scuttle without being aware of what had taken place, for the whole had been done without noise, and as he stooped down, the Englishmen capsized him over, and again clapped on the hatch and secured it. This was a moment of intense anxiety: the boat was close to the schuyt, and if any suspicion was excited in the man's mind at not seeing the others, he might keep off, and escape would be impossible. However, he sculled alongside, and asked for the schipper.

'They are down forud,' replied Blocks carelessly, 'getting out a jib; and want your help.'

'Yaw, well,' replied the man, 'I will go;' and he leisurely walked forward, whilst Blocks and Edmonds, having cast off the painter, sprang into the boat and shoved off.

'Now, pull steady and strong,' said Blocks; 'do not be impatient—keep cool, for of a certainty you pull for your life: the tide is still with us, and we have a good chance to get clear off.'

In about four minutes the discharge of a musket, and the whistling of a ball close past them, conveyed undoubted information that the schipper and his son were free. A second ball struck the boat and passed through the stern,

but did no further damage. 'This is close shaving!' said Blocks; 'pull steady, Edmonds, and keep stroke; it will not end here—we shall soon have them on our track.'

There were several schuyts anchored a short distance above the one in which the Englishmen had embarked; and on seeing what was going on, their boats were speedily in requisition, whilst a six-oared cutter launched from the shore. But the frigate had also observed the cockle-shell as she came dancing over the waters; the musketry was music to which they had been accustomed, and their glasses gave them some little insight into the state of affairs. Out went her boats, and they were manned with armed men almost before the tackles were unhooked, and 'Hurrah!' was shouted as they stretched out to meet the flotilla of the enemy. Rattle came another peal, and the musketry had become multiplied.

'I am hit,' groaned Edmonds, dropping his oar and falling from the thwart; whilst a cheer from the Dutch showed that they were sensible of the advantage.

Blocks sprang aft and made his first attempt at sculling; and though extremely awkward at the outset, he nevertheless propelled the boat onwards. The six-oared cutter neared them fast—the balls hissed and whizzed about him, but still he persevered, notwithstanding two of the fingers of his left hand were severely shattered, The frigate caught a fine breeze, and stood as near towards them as shoal water would allow; she tried her range, but the shot fell short. Not so the frigate's pinnace: the twelve-pounder in her bows scattered the plums amongst them, and the schuytsmen pulled short round for their vessels again. The six-oared cutter, however, persevered, and was at no great distance; muskets were levelled within half-a-dozen fathoms of poor Blocks, who ceased sculling, and not a trigger was drawn.

'O that my worthy benefactor were at yon guns!' exclaimed Blocks: 'he would pitch the iron into them, small as the mark is.'

Scarcely had the words been uttered—the cutter was not more than two boat's-hooks' length distant, when an eighteen-pounder entered her bows and almost tore her to pieces. Down went the muskets after one or two had been fired unsuccessfully, and away sculled our hero again might and main: the cutter sank, and the men were swimming about for their lives. In five minutes afterwards the boats closed with him, picked up five out of the eight who had been in the cutter, and taking the cock-tail in tow, dragged her almost under water. Blocks laid in his oar, and supported his unfortunate friend, who was seriously wounded, one ball having passed in at his mouth and gone through the back of his neck, whilst another had grazed his head and carried away part of his right ear: he was insensible, and, Blocks feared, dying.

'Hurrah!' shouted the boat's crew, delighted at having something to do; and in about a quarter of an hour they were close to the frigate, a fine two-and-thirty. Blocks had thrown off his jacket before he got into the punt; he had on, therefore, only his shirt, saturated in many places with blood, and a pair of rough blue trousers of Flushing cloth: his hat had gone overboard, and he had no time to pick it up.

'What's the frigate's name?' inquired the midshipman, as he got into the pinnace to pass over the gangway.

'He's English, by——!' exclaimed the man; 'why, my fine fellow, it's the saucy *Le Cerf*, commanded by——.' But Blocks did not wait to hear by whom; he assisted in getting his wounded friend up the side, and then followed himself. On reaching the deck, he cast his eye aft, and could not refrain from giving one 'Hurrah!' for there stood at only a few paces from him the generous and gallant Yorick, whilst he felt his arm firmly grasped, and a grim visage peered into his face; it was his generous patron. —'I knew no other hand could throw as hot so well,' said Ten-thousand; 'but how isall this?'

'Eh—why, ay,—d—— me, but *it is* flesh and blood!' exclaimed the gunner. 'Why, youngster! who are you,—where the d—— do you come from? D—— my ould top-lights, if this arn't nickromancy!—Why, Ten--speak to me, Ten;' and the veteran was reduced to childish weakness.

'You are wounded, young gentleman,' said Yorick, shaking our hero heartily by the right hand, to the astonishment of the officers. 'Come, come, you do not yet belong to the ship; come down into my cabin, my boy. Who is your companion?'

'He is a lieutenant in the ——' answered Blocks, his heart almost bursting with joy to be once more, and so unexpectedly, amongst his friends. 'I fear, sir, he is dangerously wounded.'

'What have they done with him?' inquired the captain. 'Mr. Tonguings, let him be immediately carried to the cabin; the doctor must attend him there.'

'May God A'mighty bless you, Captain Yorick!' said the gunner, coming aft, with his head uncovered. 'Ounly one more look!' and he gazed intently on the youth; then, turning away, he exclaimed, 'It's himself—it's himself! and now, Will, ye're a man again!'

CHAPTER X.

'—— You that will fight,
Follow me close,—I'll bring you to 't.'

THE surgeon promptly attended in the captain's cabin, where the wounds of Edmonds were examined and pronounced not mortal; and our hero suffered the amputation of two middle fingers from his left hand. A cot was slung for the former, Yorick declaring he should remain under his own immediate care; and Blocks joined his benefactor, who had got half-groggy with joy. He ascertained that the Dutch Indiaman had arrived safe and been detained; so that, instead of a re-capture, she had turned out a full prize. Captain Yorick had been removed from the *Scratchee* to *Le Cerf*—certainly an improvemen—from an eight-and-twenty to a two-and-thirty: by dint of interest he had taken his

gunner and coxswain with him. Macdonald's treatment of Blocks had been exposed by the men, and the unfortunate fellow, in a fit of intemperance, had jumped overboard at sea, and though the ship was immediately hove to and the boats lowered down, he never rose again; and thus perished a man who, but for his unaccountable propensity to intoxication, would have been an ornament to the profession.

Excess in drinking is certainly a species of mania, and not unfrequently allied to talent. That the habit may be checked in its early bias, is as certain as that disease may be more readily counteracted in its first stages than when it has acquired firm hold of the system; but let it once get deeply rooted, and it is seldom that a beneficial change takes place. Of all the temptations that beset human life, intoxication is the most easily avoided, yet when indulged, is the most difficult to resist—and every day's experience shows how disastrous are its results. In almost every other propensity, there is a satiety after gratification, which if it does not altogether prevent, at least checks repetition; but the habitual drunkard turns like a dog to his vomit—he would never be sober whilst liquor could be obtained, and if compelled through the want of it to become a rational being, the moment an opportunity offers to repeat the immoral practice, he at once annihilates that reason which the Creator has bestowed upon him for the purpose of elevating him above the beasts that perish. More than one-third of the ills and evils which beset human existence have their origin in this baneful vice: it engenders disease that passes from generation to generation: it debases the mental faculties, and turns a blessing to a curse; it makes the strong man weak, and the weak an idiot; it tenants the madhouse, the gaol, the hospital, the burial-ground—it is the fruitful source of every crime; the drunkard in his annoyance of others destroys himself—he is a reckless suicide on this side the grave, and knowingly and wilfully cuts off all hopes of happiness hereafter. Offensive and dangerous as it is on shore, yet at sea drunkenness is still more so, where the misconduct of one or two may be the destruction of hundreds: hence arises mortality in a hot climate, debility in a cold one. To drunkenness we may attribute very many of the founderings in the ocean, and the wrecks upon the coast: in short, the drunkard makes for himself a hell on earth, with the conviction stamped upon his mind of eternal punishment hereafter.

'Well, my boy! and where have you been stowed away all this here long time?' inquired the gunner, as our hero sat by his side in the confined out-of-the-way darkness-visible sort of a place which forms the gunner's cabin in a frigate. 'Where have you been to, Ten, and what have you been doing? Many's the hour I've come to an anchor in this here cabin, and wondered what could have become of you; for, somehow or other, I felt a sort of a sureness that you were still riding it out in the roadstead of life; because why? there was a whispering like in my heart, and the voice was your'n, Ten, and it used to tell me that we should come within hail again,—that you warn't overboard for a full due, and that though they'd made a doctor o' divinity on you by chalking D.D.* again' your name, yet you'd board us some day in the smoke and rub it off the muster-book. And now it's all comed true, Ten, what the voice tould me; here you are once more, my tight un, sound as a roach, barring the bit of damage to your fin. Ah! well, my boy! you should have seen your ould friend the clargyman and his lady!—Why, what's the matter with you, Ten? you seem sick: take a drop of grog, my boy.'

The mention of Mr. Hector had brought a flood of recollections on the young man's mind: the happy days he had passed at the parsonage—the delightful association with Eugenia—their meeting again at Dort—her efforts to provide him a place of safety—her appearance before Laison—and, finally, the closing scene before the Stadthouse—all rushed with the rapidity of lightning upon his retrospective thoughts. The gunner had seen and knew her, and, for the first time since the fatal event, he could unreservedly converse with a countryman upon the dreadful spectacle he had just witnessed; but still there was a slight aberration of intellect as the whole passed in review before him—a short recurrence of that horrible malady that had consigned him to a lunatic asylum.

A wonderful and beautiful piece of mechanism is the human frame; but its surprising qualities and powers sink almost into insignificance when placed in comparison with the operations of the mind. The body may be moved from one position to another, it may be conveyed to distances extremely remote; but this is a work of time, of labour, and not unfrequently of corporeal suffering: but the mind traverses the earth in the flight of a moment; the fingers upon the dial may have scarcely moved, whilst the mind is grasping at ages past, and shadowing forth events which may fill up ages yet to come. The body is the creature of time; the mind is an emblem of that essence which will endure through all eternity. Yet this bright and glorious emanation may be unsettled and wavering—it may become distempered and deranged whilst allied to mortal infirmity; it is only when it has shaken off its dust and ashes that it attains its full and unlimited perfection.

Our hero had lived many months over again in the space of a few seconds, and the whole suddenly pressing upon his reason, once more made it reel and totter. The gunner saw by his manner that there was something uncommon, though he could not divine what it was.

'Poor old man!' exclaimed the young midshipman, stretching out his hands towards his kind friend,—'poor old man! grey hairs could not plead with cruelty. Oh! it must be a fearful death, that hanging!'

'Why, for the matter of grey hairs, Ten,' said

* D.D. These letters are placed against the name in the ship's muster-books of any person deceased. They are intended to signify the words 'Discharged, Dead.'

the gunner, 'thank God, I arn't got one in my head, seeing as I've never been much in a cowld climate: and as for hanging, why, I take it to be a ticklish sort of work, as you obsarve''

'Then why not spare him, sir?' continued the youth; 'what crime could you allege against him? You have foully perpetrated murder!' he covered his eyes with his hands: yes, the blood of innocence,' and he almost screamed, 'cries from the ground for vengeance!'

'Well, I'm bless'd if this don't beat cock-fighting!' responded the amazed gunner, who had no idea of the real state of the young man's mind. 'Why, Ten, I say, what the devil consarn are you overhauling on now?—Murder, eh? No, no! I have knocked daylight through many an onfort'nate, I'll allow; but it was all done in the way of duty,—and killing a man and murdering a man arn't exactly the self-same thing, as I take it. The seaman who fires his gun and hits his mark, does it by the law of the land, as much as the judge who hangs the criminal.'

'But he was no criminal!' answered our hero, raising his voice louder and louder, and manifesting symptoms of extreme irritation. 'And as for law—do you give the sacred name of law to your own brutal bloody-mindedness? Do you—'

'Why, what lay are you on now, Ten?' inquired the gunner, growing rather warm, but yet restraining himself through the gratification he enjoyed by the young man's restoration to his friends. 'Are you making any delusions in regard of that affair aboard the lugger, when I first larned you to snap a trigger?—Ay, ay, Ten! you showed yourself a good marksman, my boy,—brought him down at the first shot.'

'I did—I did! the pistol was true, it did its duty,—and we buried him in the well,' triumphantly returned our hero, connecting the death of Tiercelin with the occurrence mentioned by the gunner.

'Ay, ay, he kicked the bucket, Ten,' responded his companion; 'and the well he fell into is too deep for 'em to draw him up again.'

'Are you sure of that?' inquired the young midshipman eagerly, but with a solemn voice. 'Was it murder, or was it——'

'Murder?' reiterated the gunner; 'why, Lord love your heart, no!—'twas all in the way of duty;—what ud make you think it was murder? You was fighting for your king in open war, shot for shot, and d—— all favour;—well, you sees Johnny Crapau in the main rigging——'

'—And I fired at him from under the table,' interrupted the young man, still confusedly connecting the two events.

'Table?' responded the elder Blocks, greatly puzzled to find out the drift of the youth's meaning; 'there wa'n't any table in the pinnace, not by no manner of means; and you fired with a jolly's musket, and not with a pistol!'

A handsome fresh-coloured young man in uniform descended to the gunner's cabin, and was immediately invited in. 'I've just come to take a look at my new patient,' said he. 'How do you feel after the operation of the knife?'

'It was a bloody and a dastardly deed?' exclaimed our hero, the word knife acting as a connecting link with past events.

'Why, I'll allow that there was rather a copious hemorrhage,' assented the assistant surgeon; 'but still, I do not see how the term dastardly can apply.'

'What! stab a man in his sleep, and say it is not dastardly!' raved the young midshipman. 'Out upon you for a wretch!'

'Well, I'm blow'd if I can tell what to make of it!' said the gunner, with a degree of vexation and impatience. 'Mayhap some of them there little Dutch girls have been laying athwart his hawse:—there used to be one, you know, Ten, —Miss Jenny?'

A wild yell, between a laugh and a shriek, was the response, as the young midshipman sprang upon the assistant surgeon. 'Villain!—dastard!—murderer!—you cannot restore her to life!—No, no,—she is safe from contamination!—she died—ay, she died in these arms, beneath the corpse of her aged father, as it hung swinging in the wind upon the gibbet. Dubois, this was your doing,—I have you now!' and he firmly seized the doctor by the collar. 'Yes, I know where I am. Traitor!—renegade!—deserter!—you shall not be drowned and come to life again!—Master-at-arms!' he shouted, as loud as he could; 'ship's corporal! help!—murder!—help!'

The assistant surgeon in an instant comprehended the whole affair, and sat perfectly still;—but not so the gunner, who caught the midshipman by the arm and was about to drag him forcibly away, but the former uttered, 'Keep still, Mr. Blocks,—sit down,—I surrender myself to the laws.'

'Now may ould Nick's great-grandmother have the nursing of you!' exclaimed the mortified and astonished gunner. 'I'm d—— if I can make anything on it!—you seem to be all tarred with the same brush.'

'Seize this miscreant!' ordered our hero to the men whom his cries had brought below; 'he is a traitor and a murderer;—take him on the quarter-deck, before the captain.'

'I confess it all,' said the doctor calmly, 'and voluntarily give myself up. My name is——' he hesitated.

'Dubois,' added Ten-thousand: 'a man who has so many names may chance to forget one. —Away with him, men!'

'I say, Muster Blocks, what are we to do?' inquired one of the people. 'I nat'rally supposed that the doctor might have a death or two chalked again' him in the regard of boluses and black draughts; but to be logged down as a murderer, and to confess it too!—Ay, ay, it's no use winking, doctor; I heard you confess it myself. Didn't you, Jack?'

'Why, as to the matter o' that,' answered Jack, hitching up his trousers, 'if I'm called upon to swear upon the after-davit to the thing, my oath would be in the affirmative, and——'

'Away with him on deck!—Ha, ha! Monsieur Dubois, I thought I should have you at last!' said the midshipman, resigning his charge to the seamen.

'What ship's name's that, Jack?' asked the man who first spoke. 'Monseer Doeboy? Well, I'm —— but it's a comical name for a doctor, anyhow!—But, Muster Saunders, your name arn't Doeboy, nor your father's afore you.'

The assistant surgeon whispered to them as the youth turned to get his hat, but not loud enough for either him or the gunner to hear; and the latter, smoothing down his hair and biting his quid, said,—'If so be that my young friend here means a fellow of the name of Dubois that we took in a prize, why, then, Muster Saunders ain't him not by no manner o' means, seeing as he went overboard in Plymouth Sound, and his body was picked up afterwards.'

'No, no!' exclaimed Ten-thousand, sharply; 'it was the devil himself, whom neither water can drown nor fire burn. There, there he stands! —Say, is not your name Dubois?'

'I am sorry to say it is,' answered the doctor in a tone of deprecation, 'and I am ready to go before the captain.—My name is Dubois—that Dubois whom all supposed drowned.'

'Now, may the devil nip the liar's leg off!' exclaimed the gunner angrily. 'What! you Dubois?—the Dubois who went overboard at Plymouth Sound?'

'It is most true,' gravely replied the young surgeon: 'come with me to the quarter-deck and you shall be fully satisfied.'

'Well, mayhap it may be,' said the gunner scornfully; 'but if you warn't drowned, you've got d——bly shrunk in the wetting.—for the fellow I mean was full a fathom good measure, whilst you're not more nor five feet seven. But come along.—I'll see the end on it; though I'm blessed if I don't think you're all going cranky together!—Come along, Ten!'

One of the men to whom the doctor had whispered, had immediately quitted them and communicated with the head surgeon, who intimated the condition of the young midshipman to the captain, with a recommendation to humour the delusion, as the best means of tranquillising him; so that when the whole party had got to the quarter-deck, they were directed to go down into the captain's cabin. The gunner, almost as much bewildered as he was amazed, kept close to the young midshipman, so that there was no opportunity of apprising him of the deception, and when they entered the cabin and he heard his commander immediately address Mr. Saunders by the name of Dubois, he was more than ever convinced that his senses had forsaken him, and he muttered to himself, 'Well, well. I arn't —I carn't be right in my head; and that's as clear as mud.'

'Captain Yorick,' said our hero solemnly, 'your understanding and judgment are correct;—you know the traitor, and will not suffer the law to be outraged—you know Dubois.'

'I do, young gentleman,' returned the captain, 'and you merit well of your country.—Master-at-arms, take him away, and put him in irons.' The supposed culprit was removed. 'And now, my young friend, go and turn in a little while—rest assured the rascal shall be hung.'

'Hung!' shrieked the youth in a piercing tone and manner of wildness that made everyone shudder: 'Hung!' he repeated; 'yes, yes, his grey hairs were blown about his forehead by the breeze; his eyes were looking on me—the unhappy outcast he had sheltered! Sir, I saw his body swinging on a gibbet; I saw—oh, God! oh, God!'—and he pressed his hands upon his brows—'I saw his daughter—the old man's daughter!—she was gazing at her father's corpse, but her last look was on me—yes, Captain Yorick, it was on me—' his eye caught the gunner's, and again he shrieked, 'Wretch! monster! —it was by your orders the hellish deed was done! Will you not have him seized, Captain Yorick? His rank is that of brigadier-general, one of French creation. Why is he at large?'

'Seize him instantly,' ordered the captain, to the great consternation of the worthy warrant-officer, who immediately found a marine on each side of him, with his bayonet sloping on his arm.

'Now may God A'mighty forgive you, Ten!' uttered the gunner; 'I never hanged so much as a cat or a dog in my life; and as for being one o' yer parley-woos, or a brig-rigged general, why, Lord love your heart, Captain Yorick! do I look like a lubberly Frenchman? I could bear being charged with any consarn but that; it's onnat'ral to call a true-born, thorough-bred British tar, a French creation. I'm saying, Ten, it's what I call paying out the slack rather too handsomely; and either you are mad, or else I am.'

'Mad?' shouted the youth, running his fingers through his hair, and clasping the palms of his hands upon his forehead. 'Well, well—' and he knelt down at the gunner's feet, as the scenes in the lunatic asylum took their revolution in his thoughts—'great Jupiter!—dread omnipotent! —I bow before thee!'

'Why, ay,' reponded the gunner, trying to raise the prostrate young man, 'there is a little more sense in that, Ten, for I was one mustered upon the books of the ould *Jupiter*—though I never belonged to the *Dreadmipotent*. But rouse up, my boy! I forgive you with all my heart about them hangings and murders; but it was rather too much of the monkey to call me a Frenchman. Eh! how's this?—what's the matter with the young gentleman?—why, he gasps like an ould maid in a trawl-net. Muster Blocks!—Ten! I say—' the address was unheeded—the overwrought feelings of the youth were too much for his weak frame, and he lay extended on the deck in a strong fit. Every aid that surgical and medical skill could bestow was promptly given. The gunner was apprised of the young midshipman's disordered intellect, and required no further explanation of what had taken place; he conveyed him carefully to his own cabin, and couched him in his own snug cot; but days and weeks passed on—the angel of death shook his heavy pinions above the poor sufferer like a hawk fluttering in the air above his prey, yet, by unremitting attention and care, reason was restored and life was saved.

The recovery of Edmonds was more rapid than the professional gentlemen anticipated;

and though some time elapsed before he could enter into conversation on account of the state of his mouth, yet at length he was enabled to relate the manner in which he had become acquainted with our hero; though he forbore to mention, except in general terms, the cause of his own confinement in that fearful receptacle. Great curiosity and much interest were excited to hear the young midshipman's narrative of his escape, and Captain Yorick gathered from his incoherent ravings that he must have endured considerable suffering both in body and mind.

The frigate had joined a squadron under the orders of Captain James Charity in the *Réunion*, the capture of which by the *Crescent* Captain Yorick had witnessed, as stated at the commencement of the fifth chapter. Besides this, there were the *Rainbow*, fifty, Captain Whackson, and the *Virgin*, twenty-eight, Captain Blanco. On the 22nd of August they were cruising a little to the northward of the Naze of Norway, when, just as the watch was called after dinner, the man on the foretopsail-yard shouted, 'Pon deck there!'

'Halloo!' responded the lieutenant of the watch, whilst a sudden stillness prevailed fore and aft.

'Two strange sail in sight to wind'ard, sir,' shouted the man.

'The commodore has hoisted 117, sir,' exclaimed the signal-man, who had just taken the glass from his eye. 'And, avast!' he added, again applying it,—'there's the compass-signal—a white pennant over horizontal white and red.'

'Answer it,' replied the lieutenant, who had walked aft and taken a small red-covered book from his pocket, in which he read to himself, 'Chase ships in view;' and then turning over to the commencement of the pages, where a number of flags were prettily coloured, he added, 'West-nor'-west.'

He was preparing to descend to the cabin, having previously shouted for the boatswain, when Captain Yorick, whose quick hearing had attended to the hailing, made his appearance on the quarter-deck.

'Foretopsail-yard there!' exclaimed he, 'can you make out which way the strangers are standing, or what they look like?'

'No, sir,' answered the man; 'they are too distant yet; but they loom large, sir.'

'Trim sails,' said the captain; and immediately the ship was brought round on her starboard-tack clean full, the strangers being then broad upon the weather-bow. 'Make sail!' shouted Yorick; and in three minutes every stitch of canvass was spread that could do any good in propelling the frigate onward. 'Send my coxson to the wheel,' ordered the captain; and the man was instantly at his post.

Some of the officers had gone aloft with their glasses; and in a very short time they hailed the deck to say that the strangers were two large ships, and, with a cutter in company, were standing for the land on the larboard tack.

Captain Yorick straddled to the binnacle, noted first the ship's course, then the directions in which the strangers were seen, and thirdly, he took the bearings of the land.

'They are bound into Egeroe,' said he, addressing his first-lieutenant.

'Most probably, sir,' replied Mr. Tonguings. 'I dare say they are poor Norway-men—black bread and corn brandy.'

'It is likely I should have held the same opinion,' returned Yorick, 'if there had been only one alone, or even two ships in company; but the cutter being with them, and all three close together, has a suspicious look with it. However, we shall know more about it presently.—Quartermaster! bend on number 11* at the mizen top-gallant mast-head. At all events, we'll be ready.'

Beautifully and boldly did the gallant *Le Cerf* bound over the smooth blue waters just ruffled by the warm breeze that bore her along, and in a short time the strangers could be seen from the deck. Every glass was put in requisition, every eye that could get a peep through one was anxiously stealing a sight, and many were the conjectures and assertions amongst both officers and men as to the quality and nation of the vessels they were nearing.

'I say, Jem,' exclaimed a forecastle man to one of the boatswain's mates who had caught a casual glance through the quartermaster's glass, 'what do you make of 'em, my boy o?'

'Make of 'em!' answered the man; 'why I ounly got sight of the headmost, and I'm blow'd if she ain't the ould slop-ship at Sheerness, deep in the water with a cargo o' banyan days. The cutter I take to be the commissioner's yacht, coming out to pay us our six months' whack: and as for the other, she may be either a Portsmouth wherry or a first-rate, seeing as I never seed her at all.'

'It's a great pity you haven't the keeping of the log-book, Jem!' said another; 'all your entries ud be so werry correct.'

'I'd rather keep the purser's accounts,' returned the boatswain's mate. 'I'm ——, shipmates, but we'd have true entries of the rum-puncheons, anyhow!—I wonder if any of them craft have got any schnaps aboard: a glass of gin ud be worth fighting for just now, seeing as I capsized half my grog at dinner-time.'

'And so you did the whole, Jem!' exclaimed the forecastle man; 'but it was over your lower lip though, where many a bucket of stuff has been capsized afore.—Now, I promised my ould mother a toothful of the creatur when I came back: and last time I was in a church, I prayed to fall foul of a Dutchman; and as I arn't much given to troubling 'em in that 'ere way, why I supposes my prayers are answered.'

Captain Yorick said nothing for several minutes; but his keen look was most intense as he narrowly inspected every tittle and circumstance connected with the strangers. He scrutinized the cut and colour of the sails, the position of the masts, etc., and particularly the cutter. At length, without taking his eye from the glass, he called out, 'Hoist the signal!' and the next minute the flags were fluttering at the mast-head.

'The commodore has answered it, sir,' said

* No. 11. The signal that an enemy is in sight.

the quartermaster; 'and now he's about speaking to us again. Up goes 13*, sir, aboard of him.'

'Answer it,' responded the captain; and rising up from his inclined plane, he turned to his first-lieutenant: 'Beat to quarters, Mr. Tonguings: those are three of the enemy's cruisers—two frigates and a cutter; but Dutch, not French. And now,' added he, humorously apostrophising the ship—'And now, my pretty *dear*, show yourself this day the *fleetest* of the *fleet!*'

The order to beat to quarters was obeyed; the drum resounded, the men cast loose their guns and took their stations, and everything was in proper readiness; but the winds grew light and baffling, sometimes allowing them to lay up for the strangers, and then breaking them off again; though both squadrons neared each other fast, and it was fully manifest that Captain Yorick's opinions were correct. As for himself, he impatiently traversed the quarter-deck, now and then stopping to look at the enemy, who under every stitch of canvas were pushing for Egeroe, then whistling for the wind as he inspected the trim of the sails.

'The commodore has hoisted 265†, sir,' said the first-lieutenant, addressing his chief.

'Has he, Tonguings,—has he?' exclaimed Yorick, evidently much pleased; 'that is tantamount to doing just what we like; and now, my boy, you shall have a squeak for your epaulet. Keep her rap full, quartermaster; ease the bowlines there forud,—just let them check the braces. And now then for long pipes and gin-casks!—Answer the signal, quartermaster, and bend on the ensign abaft. Main-top there, stand by to hoist the pennant.'

In another half-hour, up went the British colours; and in a few minutes afterwards, the strangers showed immense Dutch ensigns: all doubt was therefore at an end. Our hero was still very weak; but the excitement of the moment was too much for his sanguine temperament,—he could not remain below—the weather was warm and pleasant, and, not unlike the ghost of his former self, he ascended to the quarter-deck, where kind congratulations heartily welcomed him.

'I had almost forgotten it,' said Yorick, beckoning his clerk towards him; 'you have a vacant rating for a midshipman on the books, Mr. Featherstone.'

'No, sir,' returned the clerk, 'there is no vacancy for midshipmen; but there is one for master's mate.'

'Ay, ay! I remember now,' assented Yorick; 'for mate, but not for midshipman. Let me see, which is the senior young gentleman in the ship?'

'Mr. Manning, sir,' answered the naval official: 'he has served the longest by six months; but Mr. Honeybone is the oldest of the two.'

'Why, ay,' said the captain, as he pondered a few minutes, speaking to himself—'Why, ay, Mr. Manning is, like myself, an Honourable, with good interest and a handsome fortune; the rating can be nothing to him, whilst Honeybone must get to the mast-head rattlin' by rattlin'.' Then turning to the clerk, 'They are the two seniors, you say?'

'Mr. Manning and Mr. Honeybone, sir?' said the clerk inquiringly. The captain nodded. 'Yes, sir, they are the two seniors.'

'Mr. Manning!' called the captain; and the young gentleman, who was stationed on the quarter-deck, touched his hat before him. 'Quarter-master, tell Mr. Honeybone I want him:' the order was promptly executed, and a bold, good-looking youth, with a face full of devilry and fun, respectfully advanced. 'Come aft here, young gentlemen,' said Yorick; and all three walked aft to the taffrail. 'Young gentlemen,' continued he, 'you see yonder frigates?' the midshipmen acknowledged that they did by an inclination of the head: 'well, then, I've determined to have one of them for our share. Now, of course, both as it respects prize-money and station, the rank of master's mate is superior to that of midshipman—you both comprehend *that*.' The midshipmen again bowed. 'You, Mr. Manning, claim the seniority by service, though not in age: your prospects are excellent, your promotion certain—that is, unless you damn it yourself, which from what I have seen of you, I am sure you will not do;' a glow of gratified pride lighted up the handsome features of the young officer; 'money you cannot want, and the duties of mate would not altogether suit your tastes. As for you, Mr. Honeybone, your assiduity merits my approbation; though perhaps a little less of the monkey would be all the better for your health. However, sir, since I have had the honour to command this ship, I know of nothing that calls very loudly for condemnation; and I certainly must do you the credit to say that your knowledge of your profession is excellent. You have been longer at sea than Mr. Manning, though not so long in the navy; and, I believe, you are two years his elder. Now, sir, the duties of mate would be peculiarly serviceable to you in every way; for though I knew nothing of either till I joined the frigate, I have made it my business to ascertain some knowledge of all your resources and expectations. Upon you, Mr. Manning, the hopes of a distinguished family rest: and upon you, Mr. Honeybone, devolves the task of carving out for yourself that distinction to which your messmate was born. Your father is, I understand, a most exemplary and pious divine—a character that demands my entire respect, and whilst his son continues to deserve he shall not want for encouragement. Now, young gentlemen, I need not tell you that the power of rating and disrating rests in my hands, for that you must know; but I wish to act fairly to both, and therefore you shall assume my privilege on this occasion. I have a vacant rating for master's mate, which must be immediately filled up: I give you fifteen minutes, gentlemen—go and settle it between you.' Manning was about to speak. 'Nay, nay,' uttered Yorick, 'I will not hear one word till the quarter of an hour has

* No. 13. Signal to prepare for battle.

† No. 265. Ships to take the most convenient stations, without any established order of sailing

expired. Go—or rather, stay here, and overhaul it between you; and then, if you cannot decide, Mr. Manning, the rating is yours.' He pulled out his watch, noted the time, and walked forward to the gangway.

The ships were nearing each other fast, and a shift of wind brought the Dutch under the lee of the British. Captain Yorick spoke to the first-lieutenant, and instantly the voice of the latter was heard—'The hands, make sail!'

'Twhit, twhit,' went the calls, and 'Make sail ahoy!' from the boatswain and his mates, brought every soul on deck.

'Get a pull of the weather-braces, and rig-out the top-mast, and to'-gall'n't studd'n-sel booms!' shouted Mr. Tonguings. In four minutes the sails were set, and again his voice was heard—'Pipe to supper!' Then followed a speedy mastication of biscuit and cheese, another 'twhit' with the pipe, and the gruff Boreas-like vociferation of a boatswain's mate—'Grog ahoy!'

The Dutch frigates had separated: the cutter and the headmost had got well in under the land, and were pursued by the *Rainbow* and the rest; the *Réunion* not coming up so fast as her worthy commander could wish. Another half-hour, or less, would bring *Le Cerf* alongside the sternmost Dutchman; but Yorick had well calculated his time, and he knew the advantages of a full belly to an Englishman.

At the expiration of the fifteen minutes, Manning and his messmate Honeybone respectfully touched their hats to the captain, and, with smiling faces, the former announced that with their commander's permission, the latter would be grateful for the rating.

'You have decided as I expected you would, Mr. Manning,' said Yorick, with an approving look; 'and I trust, young gentleman, that in your future career your conduct will not be governed by family distinctions, but influenced by good feelings of friendly rivalry in the defence of your country. I sincerely trust you will both possess merit; one of you, I know, has great interest, and it too often happens that in the rubs of promotion the former gets most d——bly chafed in the clinch. As brother officers and brother seamen, always lend a helping hand to whichever requires it; and, only remember that in doing so, you promote the good of the service.—Never mind my trap-sticks, Mr. Honeybone; you have no occasion to look at 'em so d——d hard; keep steady upon your own legs, young man, and look out for squalls: we shall soon be in action, and I feel assured that you will not discredit your new rating. Now, away, both of you, to your stations.—Mr. Featherstone!' shouted Yorick, and the clerk was immediately at his elbow, 'have you the muster-book there?'

'Yes, sir,' returned the person addressed; 'I thought you would want it, sir, and so I brought it upon deck, with pen and ink-stand.'

'Quick, quick, then!' said Yorick, passing to one of the quarter-deck carronades; 'come, bear a hand—spread the book here. Rate Mr. Honeybone—William, I think it is—master's mate; and Mr. Ten-thousand Topsail-sheet Blocks, midshipman. D——n your pen-building! you're as nice over it as a——' what the rest was, he muttered to himself. The entries were made, and calling our hero to him, 'Young gentleman,' said he, whilst he fixed his large, full bright eye upon him for several seconds—'Young gentleman, weak as you are, I know it would be impossible for you to remain below during the ensuing action. I have rated you on the ship's books—but, mind, I do not, in your situation, command any specific duty; do any service you can, but I must insist that you refrain from over-exertion; for,' and he good-humouredly laughed, 'I cannot spare you till I've heard your history: though perhaps you've got it all in black and white—you were clever at letter-writing, you know; but no more about my legs, "an you love me." The Dutch have, no doubt, used you shabbily, and you shall soon have an opportunity of revenging yourself by showing their countrymen kindness—that is, after they've struck.' He turned away as the shot from the stern guns of the enemy came ploughing along the deck. 'Beat to quarters,' he quietly ordered; and the rolling drum was heard for a minute as a mere matter of form, for every man had gone to his station the moment his hasty meal was over. 'Mr. Blocks!' shouted the captain; the gunner's 'Ay, ay, sir,' from the forecastle proclaimed his whereabouts;—'Mr. Blocks! give the Dutchman a taste of your quality, sir—just a broad hint from the bow-gun.'

'Ay, ay, sir,' answered the gunner; and the next moment his match was at the priming—for he had anticipated the order—and a smash in the Dutchman's quarter-gallery carried away many a piece of sprawling gingerbread work of little angels in broad-brimmed hats and Dutch breeches. 'That's slap into his pipe locker!' said Blocks. 'Has he hauled down his colours?'

'Well behaved, Mr. Blocks!' shouted the captain; 'try him again in the same hole.—Sail-trimmers, away!' and in an instant the sail-trimmers had quitted their guns and appeared upon deck. 'Stand by to—in studd'n-sels! Ready, my men! First captains, get a steady aim, and don't throw a single shot away in waste; the first broadside is half the battle; point your guns well, and you'll just catch the mynheers taking their hands out of their pockets.' They were now within half a cable's length. 'In studd'n-sels!' shouted he; and down came the sails in the greatest order; the booms were rigged in, and the men on deck as the spritsail-yard of the English frigate just cleared the larboard quarter of the Dutchman, and the double-shotted eighteen pounders of *Le Cerf* poured with deadly precision a raking broadside into their opponent, on whose stern mouldings was painted the word *Alliance*.

The ships were pretty well matched as to size; but the English frigate carried eighteen pounders, the Dutchman only twelve pounders, yet the mynheers fought them well and gallantly from the moment they laid down their pipes, doing credit to that ancient spirit which had

formerly contested the dominion of the seas. The first broadside from *Le Cerf* had been tremendous, crashing and rending everything to pieces, and stretching not less than twelve killed and wounded on the deck : they were not slack, however, in returning the fire, and as they lay nearly alongside, it was downright hard hammering. Ten-thousand remained on the quarter-deck, but though so close, very little could be seen of their adversary, except the red flame from the muzzles of her guns through the density of the smoke.

Captain Yorick manœuvred the frigate to admiration, and at last placed her in such a position as to command the whole range of the Dutchman's main-deck. 'Slap it into him, my boys!—well behaved!—throw your shot steadily and sure, my sons of thunder!' were his frequent exclamations ; to which the men responded by a cheer. 'She has heavy metal somewhere aboard,' said Yorick, addressing the first-lieutenant : 'look here!' and he showed the other a hole through the quarter-deck bulwark that had evidently been made by a twenty-four or thirty-two pounder. 'But no matter, Tonguings—she's ours, and you'll be running up the Swin in her by this day week. By the Lord Harry! there goes the spanker-boom, and a splinter has hit the man at the helm. How is it, Mole? are you hurt?'

'Well, then, yer honour,' answered the man, still holding the wheel whilst standing upon one foot, 'I've got an ugly rap upon one of my lower stancheons, which feels to me to be sprung just below the knee ; but mayhap if it was fish'd with a piece of elm on each side, I should hould on without going below.'

'You don't mean that your leg's broke, my man—do you?' inquired Yorick, with considerable feeling.

'Why, yer honour, mayhap the doctor wouldn't put it down altogether expended,' returned the seaman ; 'but I'm thinking there's one more twist in my leg than ever my mother gave me. Easy, yer honour, easy! it's carried away, sure enough.'

Yorick had knelt down and felt the poor fellow's leg, and found that it was indeed broken in two ; yet the man remained firm to his duty. 'Here, my lads,' said the captain, calling to a couple of seamen stationed on the quarter-deck—'take him under the arms, and lower him down handsomely on this grating, whilst Mr. Tonguings and I 'tend to his legs. Now mind what you are about! Look to your guns there, and don't you heed to what we're doing! "A keen eye and a steady hand."—Are you ready, Tonguings? Now, then, lads, raise him bodily an inch or two ; that's it—lower away!' and Mole was extended on the grating.

'God A'mighty bless yer honour,' exclaimed the grateful seaman ; 'I shall do now till the doctor comes to overhaul me. But there's Jack Green there, I'm thinking, as ull want his assistance first, if so be as the enemy arn't quite stopp'd his allowance.'

Yorick looked in the direction he knew the individual named ought to be in, and there he beheld him lying over his gun, one arm and part of his breast entirely torn away. He remained quiescent for a few seconds, and then rolled over the breech of the gun, where he was caught in the arms of his shipmates a lifeless corpse. 'Carry the body in amidships,' said the captain, 'Hurrah, my boys, avenge his death!'

Our hero, having no particular station, walked round the quarters upon the main-deck, where, notwithstanding the noise and the murderous nature of the affray, everyone seemed as cool as if he was engaged in mere ordinary duty. Rough jokes and nautical wit were bandied about rather more than usual, and all hands seemed in their natural element, which, like strong grog, was a mixture of fire and water.

'Depress her muzzle a bit, Bill, and slue her breech forud,' said the captain of one of the guns ; 'there's round and grape in the charge, and I'm just a-going to give it him slap into the Dutchman's treasury—and that's his 'bacca-box. Look out for a clear—so—easy, lad, easy!—train aft an inch or two—and now I have him!' Off went the gun, and away flew the shot through the crashing timbers of the enemy ; but the smoke prevented the knowledge of its effect—though the seaman declared 'it had told true, for he could smell the 'bacca.'

In the meantime, the *Réunion*, the *Rainbow*, and the *Virgin* stood after the other frigate and the cutter ; but the frigate was admirably manœuvred and well fought—her twenty-four pounders, fired from the stern, were severely felt by the chasing ships, whose sails and rigging were much cut, and the number of killed and wounded exceeded what has been generally termed the average of a broadside-engagement, and afforded an additional proof of what might be effected by a good stern-battery well directed. Her name was the *Argo ;* and though she suffered greatly from the shot of the British ships, yet, together with the cutter, she got safe into Egeroe, to the great disappointment of our gallant tars.

Yorick, however, played a sure game ; he had his antagonist close alongside, and the people hammered away with a hearty good will for about an hour, when down came the Dutch colours, and the *Alliance* was their own. About forty killed and wounded were found upon her decks. The mynheers clapped their hands into the pockets of their capacious nether-garments, and bent to the fortune of war, satisfied that they had done their best : and so they had, for they fought with bravery, and only yielded when resistance would have been utter folly.

Le Cerf lost four men killed, and thirteen wounded. Mr. Tonguings was directed to take charge of the prize, and Mr. Hugem, first of the *Réunion*, was sent home in her with the intelligence ; and Lieutenant Edmonds availed himself of the opportunity of returning to England; whilst our hero was, through the kind consideration of Captain Yorick, suffered to accompany him as one of the officers of the prize-crew, and on his arrival to have leave of absence to recruit his health ; he also gave him letters of introduction to several of his friends : and, after three

cheers given and exchanged, the *Alliance* quitted the squadron and sailed for merry England.

CHAPTER XI.

'Oh, Love! what is there in this world of ours
That makes it fatal to be loved?—oh, why
With cypress dost thou wreath thy bowers,
And make thy best interpreter a sigh?'

WITH a fine north-easterly breeze, beautiful weather, and smooth water, the *Alliance* made the English land, between Dunwich and Southwold, on the coast of Suffolk, four days after parting with the squadron; and as she had the tide in her favour, she rattled famously along past the venerable remains of that ancient cathedral that now totters upon the verge of Dunwick Cliff, and threatens 'ere long in wider wreck to lie.' The place afforded subject for conversation: it had formerly been a large and populous town, with several churches, and now, by the encroachments of the sea and other causes, had shrunk into six or seven farm-houses, and about as many cottages; the plough and the harrow passed over the ground where, in prouder days, the mailed warriors had rode in triumph. Next, the square tower of Aldborough arose; and beyond this the remains of the castle of Orford, with its stately church; whilst on the low shingly beach appeared, at an unsocial distance, the two lighthouses of Orfordness. Up went the British ensign and pennant over the colours of the new Batavian Republic; and up went the union jack at the fore, for a pilot.

Who was ever on the Hoseley Bay station, that does not know old Bligh—as clever a fellow as ever took charge of a ship, and yet could not distinguish one letter of the alphabet from another? Who has forgotten his answer to his captain in a sixty-four?—when requested to point out the vessel's position on the chart, he spread his immense hand over the whole of the North Sea, and 'supposed she was somewhere thereabouts: but as for paper oceans and jigamaree lines, he knew nought about 'em; but give him a hand-lead and a dipsy-lead, he'd find his way blindfold.' Well do I recollect him, with his large rolling eyes and his thick frieze jacket, a freeholder of the county, and one of the thirty or forty constituents who sent at the nod of the Marquis of Hertford two members to the British senate.

Old Bligh boarded the prize to the northward of Aldborough Knowl; the jack was hauled down—the signal had received a practical answer. Away they rattled through Hoseley Bay, sighted the Naze tower near Harwich, rounded the different shoals, and, as the wind and tide failed, brought up a little below the Gun-fleet beacon. The sails were rolled up, a man was stationed on the look-out, and all the rest went below.

Edmonds and his young friend were seated on the taffrail, conversing on past events, and shadowing forth faint prospects of the future. The circumstances under which they had first met, and the manner of their escape (which Blocks felt almost assured had been anticipated by Dubois), cemented a strong friendship between them. It was a bright autumnal evening,—the setting sun was throwing its gorgeous and lovely tints upon the sky and waters, whilst the line of coast looked like dark-blue islands upon a sea of molten gold.

'I love such evenings as these,' said Edmonds; 'they come like a soft small voice to the heart, whispering harmonious peace;—there is even a melody in the stillness of the hour, and the tranquillity which prevails. Nothing recalls to my mind fond and fervid remembrances so much as the first shades of twilight, as they begin to descend upon the face of nature. The days of childhood are revived,—my mother's countenance appears before me, such as it was when she called me from my play to sleep in the pretty room where the ivy grew over the cottage windows; and those glorious colours that now glisten on the waters, and spread like the curtains of a rich pavilion above the horizon, came through the diamond-shaped panes, imparting their beautiful glow to everything in the apartment. There are later scenes, too,—scenes which, however they may excite the deepest feelings of melancholy, are yet treasured in my very soul.'

'I, too, love the darkling twilight,' said Blocks. 'It is more especially in the evening hour that I seem to hold mysterious communion with my parents. I cannot bring myself to a supposition that it was through their instrumentality I was deserted and left to perish; and though I have witnessed spectacles which would almost induce a belief that a mother may forget her sucking child, yet—no, no! I cannot believe that my parents had anything to do with it. Sometimes I fancy my mother, all beautiful and kind, is watching over me; and there have been intervals, Edmonds, in the calm twilight hour, when the heart seems to be most sensible that its thoughts and desires are known to the Creator,—I say, there have been intervals such as these when I have conversed with some secret agent—some invisible being,—not face to face—not by utterance of the tongue, but in the silent operations of the mind. I often yield to the idea that my mother is in her grave, but that her spirit still communes with mine.'

'I know the feeling well, my young friend,' returned Edmonds, as a gloom of melancholy passed over his fine features; 'and much as it may be asserted, that those who quit the flesh are never again seen in their corporeal semblance, I am of a different opinion. There have been instances of supernatural visitations:' he passed his hands over his eyes, and heavily pressed down the upper lids: 'I know it—I have witnessed it.'

'How?' inquired Blocks eagerly;—'tell me, Edmonds, how? I have had, or imagined I have had, something similar presented to my own sight,—one that I tenderly esteemed—one who died in these very arms.' The youth shuddered. 'If it will not pain you too much, relate the particulars: remember, you promised me something of your history in exchange for mine.'

'I did so,' responded Edmonds; 'and now, as the glooms increase and the deepening shadows spread themselves around us, I will redeem my promise. Were you ever at Tournay?'

'Never,' replied the midshipman; 'but I have heard it spoken of as having formerly been very strongly fortified.'

'It was so,' returned Edmonds, 'and its capabilities are still great. I was there with my regiment for some months, and circumstances unnecessary to mention brought me and a brother officer acquainted with two sisters, whose beauty and innocence were the pride and boast of the place. They were, indeed, transcendently lovely; but, though alike in person, they were different in temper and feeling. The eldest, Euphemia, was like the towering oak that spreads its branches for weaker minds to shelter under: Adèle resembled the ivy round the trunk, that added a glory to the tree which it clung to for support. Euphemia had a heart that bade defiance to oppression and wrong, yet was all softness and affection to those whom she esteemed. Adèle shrunk, like the sensitive plant from the rude touch, when injury assailed her,—her very soul was gentleness; yet in the dark hour of adversity she was as firm as her unyielding sister.

'I loved Euphemia, and she was just the creation which a soldier of honour might almost idolize. The profession I had chosen was dear to me; the heart of a brave old father, who had served his country from a boy, and rested on his laurels with the rank of major-general, had almost staked its happiness upon my career. I did not want for fortune, for my means in England were ample; but I could not consent to bring the old man's hairs with sorrow to the grave by retiring to inglorious ease, even though the hand of Euphemia should reward the sacrifice. Our attachment was reciprocal,—unlimited confidence was the result; we had no secrets from each other; and she it was who encouraged me to persevere in my profession. I offered to unite our destnies, so that she might claim the protection of a husband, but she firmly declined, "lest," as she said, "she should retard me in the glorious cause in which I had embarked."

'The French pressed upon the town—indeed, the whole of Western Flanders,—for the power of Austria was broken on the field of Fleurus through the fatal error committed by the Prince of Saxe-Coburg, who retreated with his forces, instead of following up the advantage he had gained. We had frequent skirmishes with the enemy; but it became evident that the British army could not maintain its ground, and we should soon be compelled to evacuate Tournay.

'Again and again I urged Euphemia to accompany me as my wife; but she determinedly refused. I begged, I entreated—I pointed out the dreadful scenes that had marked the progress of the Republican army, but in vain; her constant reply was "Henry, your honour is more precious to me than life itself. I love you too well to become an incumbrance, which may clog your future noble calling—cease pressing me if you wish to spare me greater pain than the thoughts of separation cause me. I may die, Henry; but rest assured I shall die yours in person and in affection, and my last moments will bring with them the sweet consolation that I have been faithful even unto death.

'As for Adèle, she thought not of the French, nor the danger which was threatening; she basked in the smiles of the man she worshipped, and his endearing kindness was alone the world in which she lived, and moved, and had her being. My brother officer, whose name was Marley, would at once have retired from the army and taken her with him to England; but no persuasions could induce her to quit her sister—there she was as firm as the massive rock; and shortly afterwards our troops retired, and we bade farewell to those we so fervently loved.

'It was a bitter parting, and especially so to poor Marley and Adèle, for they were wholly unable to impart to each other that melancholy consolation which serves to strengthen the mind when labouring under distress. Euphemia enacted the heroine to admiration; I might, indeed, have almost doubted that she was attached to me, had I not known her well, and felt convinced that her assumed resolution was based upon that very attachment, and that her firmness proceeded from a determination not to add to my grief.

'Our retreat opened a passage for the Republicans, and Tournay was immediately occupied, as Lille had been before. Need I tell you the sufferings I endured, the anxiety I underwent—the unutterable anguish of unbounded love, for one whose fate was unknown to me? Day after day placed a greater space between us; and though our brave fellows struggled like men against their adverse fortune, yet, the truth must be told, they were sadly neglected by their officers, many—indeed, most of whom were mere schoolboys, who had been nursed in the lap of luxury, and were wholly unused to anything like privation or hardship. Their advancement had been effected by money; and in some instances where it was profusely lavished amongst the agents, the gradations were rapidly surmounted, and veterans of long standing and hard service had the cruel mortification to see raw youths placed over their heads. I might at this moment have had a majority: my honoured father had the offer of the purchase, but he rejected it with proud disdain, and even exposed the transaction in his place in parliament.

'The consequence of such a system must be apparent even to a casual observer; but how much stronger does the evil show itself to a careful examiner? The patriotic officer who had become grey in the service of his native land, and had shed his blood in its defence, became disgusted by the ingratitude of his country, and felt contempt for the delegate of wealth who assumed authority over him. Mistakes were constantly occurring, obvious enough to the veterans, who, however, preferred marching to death rather than point out an error which might subject them to the contumely and disrespect of those upstarts whom they despised. The Duke of York endeavoured to restrain such proceedings; but the mischief was in the system, which required an entire reformation.

'Another villainous abuse arose from supplying the medical officers of the hospitals by contract; and even the assistant surgeons were many of them taken from behind the counters of apothecaries, and were totally unacquainted with their duties. Thus the sick and the wounded were recklessly given over to worse than pretenders, and a pitiful economy, utterly unworthy of England, cost the nation thousands of lives, whilst high bounties were given for green recruits to fill up the vacant ranks of well-disciplined and experienced soldiers. In many instances the sick were left in the houses of the peasants, who, when freed from the restraint imposed upon them by our presence, turned the unfortunates out into the fields or sheds to get rid of further inconvenience, and to please their new masters the French.'

'I have been an eye-witness to that,' said the young midshipman, shuddering at the remembrance of his adventures between Ghent and Dort. 'The fate of those poor fellows is greatly to be deplored; though I must own I was frequently much indebted to them for protection against the storms. But I interrupt you.'

'The regiment to which I belonged,' continued Edmonds, 'had but little respite till we reached Antwerp; and one night, after passing the evening with Marley, I was sitting in my quarters, deeply immersed in thought upon those we had left in Tournay, and tormenting myself with conjectures that had no other foundation than my own distressing apprehensions. The moon was in the heavens, and the lofty spire of the cathedral threw its long shadow on the buildings in a peculiar manner. I walked to the window and stood gazing out upon the sky till lost in contemplation. My light had burnt out; but the moon's pale beams came uninterrupted by clouds or mists, and illumined every part of the room. Suddenly a gloom overspread the place, though everywhere else was beautifully bright and clear. It made me start: the apartment was partially darkened, and looking towards the interior, I fancied there was something which I had not before observed; but it was too ill-defined to make out exactly what it was. At first I thought it might be my servant or some of the inmates of the house; but no answer was returned to my inquiries, and a sensation such as I never felt before came with a strange sort of dogged recklessness upon my spirit.

'I had been thinking of Euphemia and her devoted attachment, and sickening at the supposition of its probable consequences; and now an indescribable restlessness pervaded my mind as I looked upon the dim object, which seemed to rise before me like a gathering vapour, impressing me with a presentiment of I knew not what. The idea of a supernatural visitation did not once occur to me; indeed, I can only compare my situation to a sort of dreamy sleep arising from the effects of opium; but yet I am certain I was wide awake, standing with my back against the window, my arms folded, and my eyes intently fixed upon the appearance which had so powerfully attracted my attention. The blood circulated very rapidly through my veins —I fancied I could hear the throbbings of my heart, yet I experienced no alarm, for there seemed to be a mysterious communication passing around me that soothed all mental agitation.

'The object of my solicitude presented a fleecy appearance, something resembling a light spiral cloud passing over the face of the moon. I moved towards it, and as I did so, it retreated towards the door and disappeared. I tried the door, but it remained locked exactly as I had left it, and the key withinside; so that nothing human could have passed out that way. I returned to the window, and there it was again, apparently attaining more consistency of shape, and looking not unlike a white gauze dress before a shaded lamp. It was then for the first time the suggestion struck me that Euphemia was no more, and her beautiful spirit had come to apprise me of the event, and take one last—one lingering farewell: yet no terror came with the intimation; I rather courted such an interview than otherwise, if, as I feared, she was no more.

'The gloom in the apartment had been caused by the spire of the cathedral intercepting the light; but when it began to pass away and the moon gradually increased its flood of radiance, the vision grew more and more spiritually bright, till the whole became perfectly distinct, and the form of Euphemia stood before me. All doubt was at an end, there was no possibility of mistaking it; whilst by her side was an imperfect shade, something similar to her own, that went and came, sometimes disappearing altogether, and then again hovering round the blessed presence of her whom I had so tenderly loved. Again I approached, and once more did they disappear in a similar manner; but on returning to my original position, there they were as plainly to be distinguished as ever.

'When first I distinguished the features of Euphemia, there appeared to be a necklace of coral beads on a red fillet round her throat; but as the light increased and the whole power of the luminary burst without impediment through the apartment, my soul was harrowed up with horror: it was blood, young man, it was blood!' And Edmonds hastily arose, and, trembling with agitation, rapidly paced the deck.

Ten-thousand had listened with the most earnest attention to this singular narrative. His enthusiastic temperament was strongly wrought upon as it proceeded; but when he beheld the extreme agitation of his friend, an apprehension crossed his mind that he was labouring under a recurrence of his malady. In a few minutes, however, Edmonds became more calm, and again seated himself.

'I can truly sympathise with you,' said young Blocks soothingly; 'such recollections must indeed be distressing; but do not let my curiosity put you to further pain: some other time, when you are stronger and more composed.'

'No, no, my young friend!' returned Edmonds, 'I will conclude it at once. But I should be more than mortal if I could look back upon the past with apathy. It is true that I have pondered on events till I have fancied my heart

was schooled to the patient endurance of the evils which I cannot mend—I thought I could speak of these things tranquilly; but I am mistaken, my young friend—they come with a startling freshness to my mind that almost maddens me. Yet it is better to give vent to my feelings by disclosing the whole to you, than keeping it pent up in secret till it burst my heart.'

'I am ready to listen,' responded the young midshipman; 'the incident is indeed of a character to excite the deepest interest: but are you certain of the fact of your being wide awake? might it not be the mere fantasy of a distempered brain wrought upon by previous intense thinking? Such things have been.'

'—And may be again,' answered Edmonds, taking up the sentence; 'but in this instance there are circumstances that set all scepticism at defiance. I spoke to the vision: but no reply came from her lips. I talked to her as I had been accustomed to do in days of joy and happiness; but the features of that death-pale face were unaltered, and the eyes were glassy and fixed. The body of Euphemia was in the grave—I knew it—my tortured mind had rushed at once to the conclusion. My senses became wild and wandering; I passed a night of extreme anguish, and the first dawn of morning found me still at the window, but not standing as at first—I had fallen into a sort of lethargy, and was sitting on the floor with my head against the wall.'

'It might have been a dream, then!' exclaimed Ten-thousand, desirous of removing from his mind the influence which pressed so heavily upon it.

'It was no dream, young gentleman,' answered Edmonds; 'there was too much of fearful reality; and yet I would not have it otherwise for worlds. No! it was indeed Euphemia—that spirit which is now within the mansions of the blessed. I own, that on first arousing from insensibility, the affair appeared to me like a dream; but, young man, this ring could be no dream;' and he held up his hand, on one finger of which was a neat gold ring set with pearls, and having a small case containing hair. 'This I had myself given to Euphemia, yet I found it in the room, near the spot where she had so luminously appeared. And, more, shortly afterwards, Marley entered: his cheeks were pale, his dress was disordered. "Edmonds," said he, "they're dead! they're dead!" "I fear it is too true!" answered I. "What, then," said he, "have you too seen?"—"I have, Marley—I have," answered I. But the whole, Mr. Blocks, may be told in a few words. After I had quitted him the previous evening, Marley had almost immediately gone to bed; but solicitude for Adèle, and other circumstances connected with their attachment, kept him waking. It must have been about the same time that I first saw Euphemia when Marley at once beheld Adèle standing near his couch: the vision went and came again repeatedly—he clearly saw the features, and was positive as to the identity. "What shall I do?" said the poor fellow, half distracted. "But I know my time of departure is not far off, and I rejoice in it. There is no one to grieve for me, or who will suffer by my death—I am nearly alone in this world, but shall soon join Adèle in another and a better." I tried to reason him out of his depression; but, alas! my own spirit wanted strengthening, and our conversation did but serve to sink us deeper in affliction.

'In a few days afterwards, we made another retrograde movement, and our regiment, after some sharp skirmishing, in which Marley was severely wounded, retreated upon Bergen-op-Zoom, and ultimately to Dort. It was here that we gained the first oral intelligence of the fate of the noble-minded girls. I was sitting with Marley, who was hourly getting weaker, when a stranger entered the apartment and inquired in French whether we did not belong to the —— regiment. I answered in the affirmative. "Monsieur Edmonds, then?" said he. I told him he was correct. "I remember you now," said he; "we were once together at Tournay." "Great God!" exclaimed Marley, "I thought so; and you have come to tell us—yes! I know it—I feel it,—they are both dead!" "They are!" responded the stranger, in whom I recognised an individual related to the sisters. We sat silent for several minutes, grief overpowering all the faculties; at length I requested information as to the circumstances of their decease, and received the following account:

'"Monsieur will remember the British troops quitting the town, and the great sorrow and terror of the inhabitants on that occasion. They had more than once before experienced the cruelty of the French, and now they dreaded it with still greater dread. The residents shut themselves up in their houses; but this did not protect them from Republican vengeance—victims were soon found, and equally as soon immolated on the sanguinary altar of outrage and murder: the tragedies of Lille and Ostend were re-acted—human blood flowed like water—the guillotine was in constant requisition, till the very graves cried out, Enough! The beautiful girls Euphemia and Adèle were at first merely examined and placed under restraint: the French commissioner was struck by their loveliness, and endeavoured to tamper with their innocence——"

'"Fiend! wretch!" exclaimed Marley; "oh, I could curse the dog even with my latest breath!" and he gnashed his teeth.

'"But the commissioner failed, monsieur!" added the stranger triumphantly; "he was repulsed, and they were marked out for destruction. Yet it was hard, messieurs—it was a refinement on cruelty, that those whom they would have died to serve should aim the blow!" and his eyes flashed fiercely.

'"How?" exclaimed I; "what do you mean? to whom do you allude?" for I could not suppose that his observation was directed to us.

'"Vous avez raison," returned the man, contemptuously; "who but reckless boys or blind dotards would have supposed it possible to escape French vigilance?"

'Poor Marley gasped for breath—a glimmering of the truth came across his mind: "I see it all," said he; "and I—I have been their murderer!"

'"You? my friend!" exclaimed I, struck with astonishment and apprehension at the words and appearance of the poor fellow.

'"Yes—yes!" he replied; "you are ignorant of it all!" and then, convulsively shivering, he added, "Go on, monsieur: it was—I know it—le petit messager!"

'"You are right!" answered the man, with considerable harshness. "Your communication, in cipher too, fell into the hands of remorseless tyrants: the females, who had been narrowly watched, were arrested; Adèle was yielded to the torture, but bore it with a fortitude that put her fiendish tormentors to shame. A second billet came, not in cipher, but couched in ambiguous terms: they were charged with holding correspondence with the enemy, and to prove the truth of the accusation, their delicate limbs were bound with cords." Marley groaned heavily, whilst the whole to me was a perfect mystery. "They were hurried in the fatal cart to Lille," continued the man; "and there ——" and the stranger paused.

'"What—what!" groaned or rather shrieked out Marley, as he raised himself upon his bed, his hands clutched together and his eye-balls starting from their sockets. "Go on—do not spare me!"

'"—And there," continued the stranger, in tones of mournful cadence, "never did more innocent or more lovely victims fall beneath the accursed axe of the guillotine!"

'"Hah!" shrieked Marley, every feature of his countenance paralysed; "Adèle—Adèle!" he bowed his head forward, rolled on one side, and was a corpse. I sprang to his assistance, lifted him up; but pulsation had ceased, and with Adèle's name upon his tongue my unhappy friend had expired.

'I required an explanation from the stranger relative to the secret communications, and a few words told the tale. I remembered that Marley had carried from Tournay a couple of carrier-pigeons given to him by Adèle; but the purpose of the gift did not cross my mind, till informed by the individual who communicated the intelligence I have repeated to you, that they had been employed in conveying billets to Adèle. Marley had never once mentioned the subject to me, probably thinking that I should oppose his scheme; for I must acquit him of entertaining any, even the most distant suspicion of the consequences of his imprudence: and thus had these beautiful girls suffered for an offence which anyone with the feelings of manhood would have readily pardoned. The effect of such an announcement was to me truly disastrous. Over-anxiety and extra duty had worn my frame; I had devoted every spare moment to poor Marley, and neglected those means which were calculated to re-establish health: the consequence was a brain fever, and my removal to that place where we first became acquainted.

'You have my history. To the French I have sworn an eternal enmity as a nation—my life shall be devoted to my country, and I pray Heaven that I may one day have an opportunity of meeting the incarnate demons who slaughtered those innocents in cold blood. O God of heaven! hear the petition that day and night I offer before thy throne, and answer according to thine own divine views of justice.'

The next day they were safely moored in Sheerness harbour, and Edmonds and his young friend Blocks proceeded to the metropolis; and our hero was, on the pressing invitation of the lieutenant of infantry, domiciled under the roof of the stern old major-general. The meeting between the father and the son was highly characteristic: the well-drilled and admirably commanded features of the veteran did not for several minutes relax from their accustomed discipline; but as the generous old man scanned the weak and emaciated condition of his child, a superior power marshalled his feelings—Nature was triumphant, and the affectionate father stood confessed.

'So, Lieutenant Edmonds, you have returned, I perceive,' commenced the veteran, a fine tall man of a perfect grenadier-build, and as upright as a drill-sergeant. His countenance had a bleak northerly aspect, with a dash of the east in the purple tints of his nose; his eyes were undimmed by age, and sparkled like the Lizard lights on a frosty night; his hair was approaching to whiteness; and there was a rigidity in his manner that might have induced a belief, that as the snows gathered above, the ice thickened below. He was habited in an undress blue military surtout, a leather stiffener round his throat, white waistcoat, and white buckskin small-clothes, with military boots. 'You have returned, I perceive,' said he, as he extended his hand to the young officer, and bowed with gentlemanly politeness to our hero. 'I regret that you should have been compelled to quit the army; though I must admit that his Royal Highness has spoken well of you.' He paused. 'You appear to be fatigued, sir—shall I order refreshment? You look weak, Henry, and have been ill,' continued he, in a voice much softened, as he contemplated his figure: 'what has been the matter—the sick-list?' He shook his head as the young man faintly smiled, and a paleness overspread his face. 'My poor boy,' added he, 'your sufferings must have been great!' and a tear stood trembling in his eye.

'I have suffered, indeed, sir,' replied the lieutenant; 'and so has my young friend here, to whom I am indebted for my escape. Sickness, derangement, wounds, have been my portion.'

'How?—wounded? I did not know of *that*,' returned the general. 'I heard you had been ill, and there was some talk about a foolish love affair—let it rest for the present—we will converse on that subject by-and-by. In what battle were you wounded?—Here, corporal! William! Robert! where the devil are you all?'

Two footmen in splendid liveries entered, and placed themselves erect on each side of the door, but disappeared the instant the word 'refreshments' was uttered.

'Come, come, my boy, be seated; and you, young gentleman, are right welcome to an old soldier's hospitality,' said the general. 'My son has not yet introduced you by name, but your uniform is a sufficient passport to the best offices of a true lover of his country. The army of England may be beat, and the calamity retrieved; but if once our navy should lose its supremacy, I fear it would be gone for ever.'

'I have to apologise, sir, for not observing proper etiquette,' said the lieutenant; 'but I have now much pleasure in introducing Mr. Blocks to your notice and regard. I thought you would have heard of our escape, as I wrote you the particulars, and it was forwarded by a fishing-smack we fell in with on the Dogger-bank.'

'That letter never came to hand, my son,' answered the general. 'But here come the rations.' The servants entered with trays richly furnished. 'Eat, drink, and be refreshed; and then you shall change your dresses for dinner. I will have no company to-day, and over our wine, after dinner, you shall tell me all about it.—Corporal!' he shouted,—'corporal! Send him hither, men.'

Blocks and the lieutenant unhesitatingly turned to at the viands, as their ride had given them an appetite, and in a few minutes a tall man with a military gait, and as straight as a ramrod, marched into the room, and drew himself up before his commander, not unaptly resembling, as they stood near each other, parallel perpendiculars erected on the same straight line. His dress was studiously neat; not one hair of his head was longer than another, and as sleek as velvet; his hands were placed by his sides in the attitude of 'attention,' and the muscles of his countenance were like marble.

'So you have come at last! Let these gentlemen's quarters be prepared immediately.'

The corporal made no reply, there was not even an inclination of the head in token of obedience, but, like a piece of mechanism, he moved round on his heels, and was marching off with a gravity that seemed to mock at every lever which human ingenuity could invent to overturn it, when the lieutenant suddenly exclaimed, 'What! Corporal Singleton, forget an old comrade?'

The man halted, came to the right-about, marched up to the lieutenant, and in an instant his gravity gave way. 'Why, I do declare, it's Master Henry! God be praised, that has brought you home again! Many wearyful and sorrowing hours have I and the general had in thinking of you; many have been the prayers we——'

'Attention!' shouted the general: the corporal was immediately as upright as a church-steeple: 'right about face—march!' and off went the non-commissioned officer as grave as a judge. 'The old fool!' uttered the general; 'has he nothing else to tell you than what great girls we've been!'

Blocks was surprised at the magnificence of everything he saw—luxury was literally pampered. The house was one of the largest in Portman Square, and the general's ample fortune enabled him to live like a prince; and yet the heir to this immense wealth had given up comfort and enjoyment, undergoing the severest privations and enduring every hardship through a love of country. The private soldier, in many instances, betters his condition by entering the army, yet does he merit commendation;—what then ought to be said of the young officer who quits a splendid mansion, and all that riches can procure, to share the soldier's toil, the soldier's couch, the soldier's rations, for the purpose of maintaining the honour of his nation? The residence he was then in was like a palace, yet had he seen its future lord the inmate of a madhouse in Holland. Such were the ruminations of Ten-thousand as he changed his dress for dinner. The place was fairy-land to him; the large mirrors in massive frames, the gilded mouldings, the glittering lustres, the gorgeous furniture, the costly plate, were viewed with astonishment: he scarcely dared touch anything; so that when the lieutenant came into his room, slender as his wardrobe of borrowed feathers was, he had made but little progress with his toilet. He candidly acknowledged his embarrassment to his friend, who smiled at his simplicity, gave him a few hints by way of admonition relative to his future guidance, and hurried him forward in the adornment of his person.

The dinner was what the general called a plain one, but to Blocks everything appeared superb: he was, however, rather disappointed at the restrained manner of his host, as he had expected to pass an hour or two of pleasant intercourse, instead of a degree of pomp and reserve which set companionship at defiance. Our hero played his part to admiration, considering that he never before had witnessed so much of high life: to be sure, there were one or two mistakes—but they passed unnoticed, and he found himself quite comfortable. The cloth was withdrawn, and the dessert placed upon the table, consisting of the most delicious fruits; the servants left them to themselves, and then it was that the general descended at one leap from his stilts: he was no longer the lofty master or the exalted officer; there seemed to be a total revolution in his nature,—he changed to the fond father and the affectionate friend. Agreeably to the proposition which had been made, he listened attentively to the recital of his son's mishaps,—blamed him for falling in love, though he admitted he did the same himself at Henry's age,—wept over the fate of the beauteous girls,—shuddered at the description of the lunatic asylum,—became enthusiastic in his commendations of our hero when hearing of their escape,—spoke highly of his gallant young friend Captain Yorick, and drank a bumper to better times. Ten-thousand was also requested to narrate his adventures, which he did in a way that secured him a patron on whose word the firmest reliance might be placed.

The down bed in which Blocks was *interred* that night was another novelty! and, oh! what a difference when compared with a midshipman's hammock! He could not get to sleep for

some time through his desire to kick about; and once when he awoke suddenly he fancied he was overboard, and struck out with the utmost vigour, the soft down yielding to the pressure of his hands like water: happily, he did not make much head-way, and consciousness very soon returned. Another time, he fancied they were smothering him in a flour-cask; but at length deep slumber sealed his eyes, and he slept sweetly and soundly.

The following morning, tailors and drapers were put in requisition; and in a few hours our hero was equipped in the first style of naval uniform, with plain clothes in reserve: Edmonds, too, obtained a fresh outfit: and all this without stirring out of doors. The corporal was factotum; and, strict as the general was with him in public, the non-commissioned officer was no less strict with the domestics, when, as he termed it, 'they were on duty.'

That day the general invited a large party to dine with him, to meet the young lieutenant on his return to his native land. There were the great and titled of the nation, men ennobled more by their virtues than by the mere exaltation which rank bestowed: there were the brave of England's pride, the veterans whose honourable scars were far more valued than the ribands and medals which adorned their breasts: there were the patriotic statesmen whose harangues in Parliament stirred up the latent energies of the country to nervous and bold exertion: there were the giants in literature and the arts whose transcendent knowledge and exquisite performances astonished Europe; and there also was the child of the troubled waters, the protegé of the humble British tar—his naval uniform entitling him to appear in the presence even of his sovereign.

The dining-room was a spacious apartment magnificently furnished, and the dinner service presented everything that was rare and costly. The company assembled in the drawing-room, and formed small groups, conversing together, some in loud earnestness, others in a tone of mystery: some were enjoying the lively sally of wit, others were listening to the cautiously-delivered opinions of one who was deemed the oracle of the times. Our hero accompanied his friend Edmonds to the scene, shrinking within himself at the idea of the galaxy of stars which he would have to pass through, but in a few minutes his self-possession returned; he had seen men before, and those whom he beheld were nothing more than men—and several of them very ugly ones too.

The general was standing near the fire, and by his side a tall gentlemanly-looking man about fifty years of age, the upper part of whose face was of rather a repulsive cast, but there was a playfulness about the mouth of a pleasing character: he was a fine figure, but somewhat thin. Near him was a young officer apparently about five-and-twenty, entirely alone, as if desirous of avoiding conversation, that he might accurately observe all that was passing around him. His regimentals were those of a field-officer; and the idea our hero conceived of him was, that he was forming the most ludicrous associations in his mind relative to the characters with which the room was nearly filled. General Edmonds beckoned his son towards him, and Blocks remained for several minutes in an uncomfortable position; which being observed by the officer, he immediately went towards him.

'I shall not wait for the cold formality of introduction, my young friend,' said he; 'it is enough 'hat we both serve our country, to make us acquainted. May I inquire the name of your ship?'

'*Le Cerf*,' replied our hero, bowing, 'commanded by Captain Joseph Sydney Yorick.'

'Indeed!' returned the officer; 'an old schoolmate of mine—and, I dare say, as full of tricks as ever. Joey was always in some scrape or battle, but generally contrived to—I think you call it, *steer* clear of punishment. I hope he is well?'

'He was so when I left the ship about a week ago,' answered Blocks; 'we parted company a little to the northard of the Doggerbank.'

'And you—oh, ay, I remember hearing of it to-day,' responded the officer; 'you have come home in the Dutch frigate—is it not so?'

'Perfectly correct, sir,' answered our hero. 'Captain Yorick very kindly gave me permission to come to England, to recruit my health, after making my escape from Holland with a French prison in perspective.'

'You have been in Holland, then—so have I,' returned the officer: 'it is an infernal country! Were you there long?'

'From the period of the retreat from Ostend, which, I think, was the latter end of June last year, till some five or six weeks since,' replied our hero.

'You were a prisoner, I suppose?' said the officer inquiringly. 'The French were not over-indulgent to those who fell into their hands;—how did they treat you?'

'I was not exactly a prisoner,' responded Blocks; 'for my knowledge of the language enabled me to remain with an officer of the French army undetected.'

'Indeed!' returned the other with surprise; 'your adventures must be worth the hearing. Were you witness to any of the skirmishing—for battles they cannot be called; for instance, such affairs as took place near the village of Boxtel?'

'No, sir; I saw but little of the fighting,' answered Ten-thousand: 'but I must acknowledge that my general treatment, even when known to be an Englishman, was honourable.'

Edmonds at this moment approached, and with great vivacity bowed to the officer. 'Colonel Wellesley, I am proud to hear that I shall have the honour of a company in the Thirty-third: his lordship has just informed me that my name will appear in the next gazette.'

'It will afford me pleasure to have you with me, Captain Edmonds,' returned the colonel. 'We were very near sailing for the West Indies; but I fancy the East will be our destination.'

'Allow me to introduce a gallant young friend to you, colonel,' said the new captain, turning to Blocks.

'It is quite unnecessary, Edmonds,' said the

colonel; 'we are now old acquaintances.—But, see, young gentlemen, Lord Chatham is beckoning you. 'I say, take a turn round the old boy's heart, and hold on by it: I shall wait your return, for you must sit by me at dinner. There, there,—make sail, as you call it.'

Blocks was formally introduced by the major-general to the Earl of Chatham, who received him very graciously and kindly, inquired into his future prospects, and though he made no promises (for Chatham was too cautious a man to commit himself even to the most humble person in creation), he yet intimated that, from the communications which had been made to him by their host, his future promotion depended upon himself, and if his conduct was meritorious, he should find a friend in him.

Dinner was announced, and the party proceeded to the banqueting-room, Colonel Wellesley catching hold of our hero's arm and confining him to his side. The long line of table brilliantly lighted up by splendid lustres gave Blocks a better opportunity of observing the guests, and, 'Oh!' thought he, 'what would my worthy friend the gunner say could he see me thus honoured!—what would Mr. and Mrs. Hector think—and——' a deep sigh almost approaching to a groan escaped him, for his memory reverted to Eugenia.

'You are unwell, my young friend,' said the colonel, looking earnestly in his face, for he had heard the aspiration. 'Come, come, let us have a glass of wine together. Holland was my first campaign; and a sorry one it was!' He filled his glass, drank to our hero, who returned the salutation. 'Ah!' continued he, 'a bumper of such stuff as that, now and then, amongst those cursed fogs, would have been much pleasanter than the abominable ditch-water that carried off so many of our brave fellows! You must have witnessed some strange scenes, young gentleman.'

The conversation thus begun continued without interruption, Colonel Wellesley devoting the utmost attention to the descriptions of the midshipman, and occasionally giving a sidelong look of earnestness at his face as he proceeded, especially when anything *outré* was related; but he found nothing that could raise a doubt of the veracity of our hero, whose countenance was frankness itself.

During the dessert, the wine circulated freely, and Blocks naturally expected that amongst such guests the conversation would be of a nature worth remembering. He was, however, greatly disappointed, as it amounted to mere commonplace, and in his own immediate neighbourhood verged upon frivolity. He could not help remarking it to his companion.

'Never mind them,' said Colonel Wellesley: 'men seldom sit down to a double feast in such companies; it is enough if they indulge the grosser appetite, and talk nonsense without feeding the mind. But, my young friend, you are a novice, or you would see many a game now playing of a strange and curious character: politics run high, and this is somewhat of a mixed assembly. What did Chatham say to you?' Blocks repeated what had passed. 'Between ourselves,' continued the colonel, 'he was sadly negligent of the navy when he was First Lord;—but in your service influence is everything, and a friend like Chatham is not to be despised. That by his side—the young man with the fine clear forehead and free look, is George Canning, a clever fellow in his way—sharp and acute, but rather doubtful.'

A dispute was going on at the far end of the table, and a plump, fresh-coloured person, addressing Colonel Wellesley, inquired 'whether he had ever seen Bernadotte during his campaign in Holland.'

'No,' replied the colonel; 'I believe he was generally with the Army of the Rhine; but my young friend here, on the right, has seen him.'

This drew the attention of every eye on poor Blocks, who felt his face flush at being thus noticed. 'Will he be so good, then, as to favour us with a description of his person?' asked the same gentleman.

'The circumstances under which I was placed at the time,' said our hero, 'may have deceived my judgment—I stood before him on a charge of murder, and the evidence was so strong against me, that, but for General St. Cyr, I might have been hurried off to execution. I was agitated and alarmed; yet, to the best of my recollection, he is a tall muscular man, with rather a heavy cast of countenance, a sedate look, with more of benevolence than any other expression.'

'Thank you, thank you, young gentleman,' said the individual who had addressed him; and from that moment Blocks became a being of importance amongst the guests.

'I set out to join my regiment to-morrow,' said Colonel Wellesley, 'and probably many years may transpire before we meet again. I trust, however, that you have now a fair field open for you, and when next I see you—— But everything must have its way.' He shook hands with the youth, rose, and departed.

It was a proud day for Blocks: though altogether it did not leave any very pleasing impression on his mind, yet he felt gratitude to that Providence which seemed leading him not only to pleasant, but to high places. For several days subsequent to the dinner, a round of visits took place; and our hero was everywhere received with great cordiality. His adventures had become known through the agency of Edmonds and the general's guests; the young ladies were delighted to talk with him about Holland and the French, and Eugenia, little regarding, or perhaps not imagining, the pang which was but too frequently inflicted on his heart.

'Come, come, my jovial sailor!' exclaimed Edmonds, entering Ten-thousand's bedroom one morning before he had risen; 'you promised to turn out at daybreak for our jaunt in the country. The corporal is on duty with our coffee, and the gig is ready for our departure.'

'I have overslept myself,' returned Blocks, 'but will rig ship and be down with you in a

few minutes. The sun, I perceive, has been mounting the rattlins for more than an hour.'

'You are right,' returned Edmonds; 'and there is every prospect of a fine day. The mare will soon rattle us down the road. I shall take my gun with me for a chance shot; and there is one at your service, if you like to use it.'

The destination of the friends was a pretty little country-box of the general's humorously called 'The Rumble-tumble,' situated in the county of Kent. It was a favourite retreat of the veteran's, where he could dispense with pomp and parade, be entirely at his ease, and talk over with the corporal the feats of former days. Here, as these pair of parallels strolled about, they were known amongst the neighbouring gentry as 'My Uncle Toby and Trim;' the former arrayed in a frock-coat or a light jacket, and the latter in a clean sort of stable dress, for the corporal had belonged to the dragoons. The general was an extremely clever mechanist, and had not only encouraged, but had also planned, many ingenious inventions to facilitate the art of war and to harass an enemy; and, what was a remarkable peculiarity, his designs did not seem so much the effect of labour and study, as to proceed from some sudden thought, or light that broke instantaneously in upon his mind. Nor could he treasure it in his memory; for unless there was some immediate application of the idea to fix its principle, it speedily vanished, and seldom or ever returned. Thus the corporal was a sort of practical machine which the general wound up to suit his purpose; and one especial charge of the former was, never to be without a piece of chalk in one or more of his pockets.

On entering the breakfast-room, the corporal gave Blocks the usual military salute with a gravity that bespoke his real respect.

'Master Harry—that is, Captain Edmonds, I mean—has just gone out to look at the mare, sir; but he will return instantly.'

'You have snug quarters here, corporal?' said our hero; 'the general seems much attached to you?'

'Why, yes, sir,' returned the corporal slowly; 'the quarters are good enough, especially for an old campaigner, whose bed has frequently been the earth, with his saddle for a pillow. And as for the general, he's queerish sometimes, sir; but, somehow or other, after all, I shouldn't like to part with him.'

Blocks smiled, but the corporal heeded it not; he had uttered what he considered to be the truth, and cared but little for the opinions of others. 'I'm told he is very ingenious,' said our hero; 'some of his inventions have been much approved of.'

'The world will be talking, Mr. Blocks,' responded the corporal. 'To be sure, we have done something in the way you mention, and the commander-in-chief has sent us his thanks. For instance, we improved upon the gun-carriage wheel, by which it was rendered more secure in traversing heavy roads; and then there is the patent rammer, and——'

'Breakfast—breakfast, old boy!' shouted Edmonds, running into the room in high glee; 'explain your inventions to Mr. Blocks when we get to the laboratory; for I understand my father has started two hours ago, and you are to accompany us down. You are something of a draftsman, Blocks, and it will really do your heart good to see the corporal's diagrams;—there is hardly a tree on the grounds that hasn't a cog-wheel or some such thing chalked upon its trunk.'

'Genus, Master Harry—I mean, Captain Edmonds—will not brook restraint,' returned the corporal; 'and the trunk of a tree may do as good service as the best drawing-book.'

'Why, ay, old boy, both have *leaves*,' said the captain. 'But what crotchet have you on your hands now?'

'I do not use scrotchit, Mas—that is, Captain Edmonds—but chalk,' answered the corporal.

'Oh, ay, I know!—but what inventions are you on with just now?' inquired Edmonds. 'Would you believe it, Blocks! a little while ago they were trying to make heel-balls from roasted potatoes, and to light up the place with smoke instead of oil. And what was the result, corporal?'

'The former failed, because we couldn't always get waxy potatoes; the latter succeeded, as you will see when you reach the Rumble-tumble,' answered Singleton.

'And the plan for extinguishing fires in theatres?' inquired Edmonds.

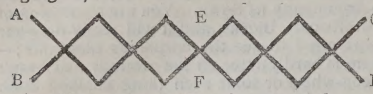
'The roof broke in and drowned the pit,' replied the corporal; 'but it has been fixed at Drury Lane, and should a fire break out——'

'They'll go on swimmingly, I suppose,' interrupted Edmonds. 'But come, Blocks, let us get our breakfasts and start.'

The meal was soon despatched; and the young men mounted a handsome vehicle, in which they dashed off over Westminster Bridge, the corporal, well horsed, riding behind. The day was beautifully fine, and the autumnal scenery rich in tint. About noon they pulled up at a pair of large folding gates, but which were immediately thrown open by means of invisible springs that acted under ground—no one appearing in sight. They drove into a shady avenue of trees, and a groom happening to be near, the party dismounted to walk to the house. The road was nicely gravelled, and as smooth as a deal floor; in fact, neatness and regularity were the peculiar features of everything they saw; the hedges were trimmed to a degree of exactness that left no single twig protruding beyond its proper place—every line had been arranged with the eye of a mathematician: and as they passed a break in the hedge they observed what appeared to be two workmen busily employed; both had flannel jackets on, like journeymen carpenters; and as they passed near the spot covered by the leafy screen, their voices were distinctly heard.

'Plague on my stupidity for leaving that fellow behind! I can get nobody to understand me,' said one; 'and now a most excellent chance will be ruined! Can't you perceive that by

making these poles at the centre act upon a pivot, and attaching other poles to the extremities, thus,' (and he used his chalk to the following figure):



—'making a succession of centres, the arms also being movable—that by bringing A B nearer together, C D will be thrown further off; and, on the contrary, by separating them more, C D will be brought closer to A B, so that they might easily be packed?'

'It is my father,' whispered Edmonds: 'he is at some invention or other.'

They stopped to reconnoitre; the corporal placing himself in a position to see what was going on without being seen himself. 'You must be downright stupid!' continued the general.

'I think I can comprehend you, sir,' said the man: 'it is on the same principle as some of the children's soldier-toys are made.'

'Children's toys, sirrah!' angrily exclaimed the general: 'pray, how dare you make such allusions! But it is ignorance, sheer ignorance, and therefore I am wrong to be angry with it. Why did I leave the corporal——' Singleton's grim visage deigned a smile as he knowingly winked his eye but said nothing. 'Now let me see,—it stands to reason that it must. By drawing the parts together, they may easily be carried: and suppose the machine placed on the bank of a ditch with a proper pressure to bring A B together, C D would be projected to the other side, and—'

'That would principally depend upon the breadth of the ditch,' said the corporal out loud.

'Not at all,' returned the general, so involved in his plan that he took no notice of the timely presence of the speaker; 'it will depend upon the length and number of the poles; and when it is once over, uprights may be driven down at E and F to support the centre, planks must be laid on the level, and there's a bridge for either infantry or cavalry.'

'Nevertheless, Robert is right,' returned the corporal: 'the principle may be bought at the toy-shops.'

'Indeed! Then mount your horse, corporal,' said the general, 'and ride to the town and purchase one. I can hardly believe it;—but if there is such a thing, it is most likely capable of improvement. Where are the gentlemen?'

'We are here, sir,' answered the captain; 'and my young friend has been much edified by your lecture on projectiles.'

'No quizzing, sir,' replied the general, good-humouredly. 'But do you comprehend it, Mr. Blocks?'

'Perfectly, sir,' returned our hero; 'the thing is very simple, as you will perceive at the corporal's return.'

'You are all alike, I think,' uttered the general in rather a vexed tone. 'But hasten in, Harry: I have been besieged, stormed, and carried by assault, within this last hour;—the assailants, I believe, are in the house.'

Without waiting for further explanation, the young men proceeded; and the flashing of white muslin at the windows of a dwelling that was singularly neat and elegant gave them notice that they should soon be in the presence of females.

'They are my cousins—wild, romping, dear little creatures,' said Edmonds. 'But, how came they here?—their place is on the north coast of Devonshire.'

In a few minutes they were before the ladies, who welcomed the captain with some degree of restraint: but Blocks was introduced first to an elderly female of commanding countenance, whose eye might have once beamed softness and love, but now seemed to flash with vindictive feelings or contemptuous scorn.—She merely bowed to our hero, without looking at him or probably hearing his name, and turned again to the exotics in the window. But not so the younger ladies, of whom there were three;—the eldest, a fine cheerful girl of eighteen; the second, more staid and demure, rather more than a twelvemonth younger; and the third, about the same age as Ten-thousand. The first two were introduced as the Honourable Misses Wentworth, Amelia and Ann, daughters of Lord William Wentworth, and the latter as Miss Waldegrave, a ward of Sir William's, but who, Blocks subsequently ascertained, was an orphan of great expectations as to wealth. The elderly lady, who was an aunt on the father's side to the fair sisters, very soon withdrew, scarcely deigning to honour them with a parting look. The moment she had disappeared, restraint was at an end—all cold formality was over, and Amelia, throwing her arms round the captain's neck, exclaimed, 'I don't care who sees me, Harry, now that frigid piece of ice has left us. You are my own kind, gentle cousin yet; and though that young sailor may laugh at me, I must beg a kiss.'

'I hope it is to go round,' said Blocks; 'and then——'

'—You'd laugh at the other side of your mouth,' returned the light-hearted girl. 'But no, no! Harry used to play with me, and call me his own little pet when I was a child; and those were happy days, Harry; would to Heaven they had never passed away!' and she sighed heavily.

'As usual, Amelia,' said her sister; 'from grave to gay, or from gay to grave; constantly changing——'

'Still the same,' added Edmonds, taking up the sentence, and impressing a kiss on the cheek of the beautiful girl.

'Thank you, Harry, thank you,' returned Amelia. 'I have nobody now to take my part, since you marched off to those odious wars. But you will not go again, I hope; you must stay at home and——'

'—Wear petticoats, eh? my pretty cousin,' retorted the captain. 'But, come, you will do for a fifer; my company wants a fifer; and once in the East Indies, why, you may marry an Indian nabob and roll in diamonds.'

'The brightest diamond to me, Harry, would be an honest and affectionate heart, so that one would serve me.' said she, whilst her face assumed a paleness that was clearly observable to all. But are you really going to the East Indies, or do you say it merely to tease me?'

'Amelia is very doubtful on the point,' said Ann: 'for my part, I should be proud to hear you were going where glory calls.'

'And what is that glory, Ann?' responded the elder sister: 'to kill or be killed; to knock off men's heads, or get your own rolled in the dust; to toil through years of absence from your native land, and when you return with a yellow face, and perhaps with the loss of an arm or a leg, to find all your youthful acquaintances dead or estranged, toothless old maids and matrons, and periwigged grandpapas. Don't go, Harry, don't go!' and a tear lurked in the corner of her eye.

'You may just as well request my young friend here to give up the sea,' exclaimed the captain, laughing. 'But, come, Amelia, let us talk of other matters. What brought you to the Rumble-tumble?'

'There's a gallant question! Help me, Caroline,' addressing Miss Waldegrave, 'help me to chastise this outline epitome of Mars! Why, what but the desire of seeing my uncle and his ungallant son? But we had scarcely been in the house ten minutes, before the general started off to throw up batteries and build bridges; and now his representative wants to know what brought us here!—The fact however is, Harry, his lordship is stopping in the neighbourhood, and set out for London this morning to visit the general. We wanted to see this pleasant retreat, and came without expecting to find any one here; but you see we are punished for our invasion:' and she looked archly: 'and now I suppose you will turn us out again.'

'You almost merit such treatment for your supposition,' said Ann, somewhat sententiously.

'I don't care,' returned Amelia; 'you may say what you please, but I am determined not to stir to-day. Uncle has pressed upon us all to stop. We are to have everything our own way—no formality and fuss. And, come, Harry, there's a dear, good cousin! show me round the grounds: I want to see the general's models. And pray let us be off before my aunt comes. I wish Uncle Edmonds would find a place for her in his model-room!'

'We have no alternative but to yield obedience,' said Edmonds, turning to the young midshipman. 'Here's an arm for each of my pretty cousins: and, Miss Waldegrave, I leave you under the convoy of a man of war.'

Blocks had more than once or twice examined the features and look of the orphan, and found something about them that deeply interested him. Their expression strongly reminded him of Eugenia, and he felt a dawning attachment on that very account; at all events, it removed embarrassment, and when he offered his arm to the fair Caroline, and it was accepted without reserve, he felt happier than he had done for a long time previous.

The model-room was an octagonal building in the form of a tent*, situated in a very romantic part of the grounds, with a small silk union jack flying at the summit. Near the entrance on each side of the doorway was a brass field-piece; and by the side of one of them was an admirable representation of a sentry, which, though only a painting, had at a distance all the resemblance of being embodied; and on the other side was a stiff figure of an artilleryman, in an undress blue jacket with scarlet collar. They were beneath the deep shade of the trees, and had every appearance of life.

'How very clever!' said Amelia, stopping to look. 'Are they models, Harry, or are they real men?'

'They are two of my father's models,' answered the captain, laughing; 'and one of them moves upon springs; you'll see it give the salute as we pass. It is perhaps the most perfect piece of machinery about the place.'

'Let us walk on then, Harry,' returned the lady, moving forward. 'I do so love such things! What a curious man uncle must be.'

They approached the building, when suddenly a loud voice was heard inside, and immediately recognised to be the general's, shouting 'Chalk! Chalk!' and instantly the figure of the artilleryman moved round on its heel and marched into the model-room.

'Didn't I tell you so?' said Edmonds. 'You see it has locomotion: and I shouldn't wonder if we find it by the side of the general chalking out some plan.'

'Well, that is beyond everything!' exclaimed Amelia. 'Did you ever see anything to surpass it, Ann, even at Spring Gardens?'

'I saw that which you might have seen, my love, had you not permitted your eyes to be deceived by this wicked cousin of ours,' said Ann, laughing; 'and that was the stiff old face of Corporal Singleton.'

'Was it, Harry?' inquired Amelia. 'What! the dear old man who used to make toys for us, and teach us the manual exercise? Well, for my part, I shall be delighted to see him.'

They entered the building, and the various beautiful models of almost every description could not fail to gratify them. The general explained their various designs and uses; and though he might not have a very scientific audience, yet he had a very attentive one—and that to him was almost an equivalent. Suits of armour worn in various reigns, pieces of ordnance, from trussed iron-bars and even leather down to the modern casting, cross bows and matchlocks, shields and breastplates, swords and battle-axes—in short, there was a display of almost every instrument of warfare used in the times of old, or improved on in the present day. There too was the plan for extinguishing fires, and fire-escapes, and numerous other inventions,

* There is reason to believe that the design of the Pavilion, under which George IV. met the allied Sovereigns in 1814, and now forming the model-room at Woolwich, was copied from that of General Edmonds.

neatly arranged to make the best of a display. The accurately-rigged model of a seventy-four afforded Blocks an opportunity of evidencing a knowledge of his profession which passed very well amongst the uninitiated: but it must be owned that he merely confined himself to the names of the masts and yards, with here and there a bit of a flourish about braces and bowlines.

From the model-room they proceeded to the laboratory, where a little thousand of everything in an unfinished state lay profusely scattered.

'Well, uncle, I declare, you must work hard!' said Amelia. 'Why, here's something of everything, from a great cannon to a child's toy,' taking up the article that Singleton had just brought from the adjacent town.

The corporal winked at the captain, and for an instant a smile hung upon his features: whilst the general uttered, 'Ay, my dear! but that toy, simple as it is, nevertheless is on a grand principle—a very grand principle: for, you see,' turning to the captain, 'it illustrates at once what I said. Press A B together, C D will be immediately projected. The power is the only thing—the power to be applied. Chalk! corporal, chalk!' The corporal obeyed; and the party left the general and his aide busily designing cog-wheels and quadrants to act as a projectile force.

The remainder of their ramble was equally delightful; and Blocks learned from his fair companion that the Misses Wentworth had a brother in the navy, of the same rank with himself, who was then in a ship of the line hourly expected home from North America. The young couple became highly communicative; for both had ingenious minds, and the heart of neither had become tainted by the frivolities of fashionable life. It is true that Caroline's birth and fortune entitled her to associate with the most elevated in the land; but Lord Wentworth, her guardian, was a man of retiring habits, preferring social comforts to pomp and splendour. Joyous was the hour to our hero, and not less swiftly did the minutes fly with the young lady, as they traversed the beautiful walks of that enchanting place.

What a strange compound of inconsistency is the human heart, and how very little of its real propensities are known to the possessor! Blocks, young as he was, had loved Eugenia with all the intensity of a first affection, and since her decease he had considered it as impossible that he could cherish similar feelings for any one else. Still there was a vacuum in his heart; professing attachment to the dead was one thing—not to indulge a fervency of regard for the living was another; and Blocks found that however much the former might remain as a memorial of the past, it was not in his power to resist those impulses of nature which by imperceptible chords unite the sexes together.

On their return to the house, Miss Alicia, the aunt, was in the drawing-room; and she very morosely, but not unjustly, upbraided them for a want of reverence to herself in leaving her alone whilst they sought pleasure. All felt the reproof, and Edmonds without hesitation volunteered to conduct the lady the same route over again; but this she declined with an air of offended dignity which gave her a look of masculine pride such as our hero had never before witnessed in a female. She sat herself upon an ottoman near the window; and Blocks, as he scanned her features, could not help thinking that deep and strong passions were cherished in her bosom. Nor was he unobserved; for at intervals Miss Alicia eyed our hero with an earnest scrutiny that seemed to have some sudden motive.

'What did you think of that seventy-four, Blocks?' inquired the captain; but before our hero had time to reply, a piercing shriek from Miss Alicia drew the attention of everyone to that lady. She was still sitting on the ottoman: the blood, suddenly rushing into her face, suffused it with a deep tinge; and then, as hastily retreating, left the pallid hue of death. She seemed almost choking with agitation—every limb in her frame trembled—her hands were pressed upon her bosom, and her gaze was riveted on the young midshipman. In less than a minute, however, self-possession returned. 'It is a nervous attack,' said she, rising up; 'I am not well. Ann, my love, your arm;' and, by a strong effort, she quitted the room with her niece.

'What can ail your aunt?' inquired Edmonds, addressing himself to Amelia; 'do you think she requires any medical attendance?'

'Heaven only knows, Harry!' returned his cousin. 'Such scenes are by no means uncommon; though I do not remember to have seen her so much agitated before—do you, Caroline?'

'Never but once,' returned Miss Waldegrave; 'and that was when the strange outlandish man was seen at the Pleasance in the Isle of Wight.'

'She will soon be better, I have no doubt,' said Amelia. 'But, oh! Harry, she does domineer over my poor father in such a tyrannical manner, that it often makes my heart ache.'

Captain Edmonds gave her a gently reproving look as he said, 'My dear cousin, that information cannot be interesting to Mr. Blocks.'

'I know what you mean, Harry,' returned the open-hearted girl: 'but the young sailor is your friend, and so he must, *par consequence*, be ours. Is not that it, Caroline?'

The general entered, and prevented further conversation on the subject. The dinner passed over heavily, and at an early hour Miss Alicia, pleading continued indisposition, ordered the carriage to convey them away. The sweet girls felt the keenness of disappointment, but they uttered no complaint; though Amelia whispered to her cousin that 'it was more caprice and bad-humour than illness.' The young man promised to drive over to the 'Bellevue' on the following morning; and thus they parted.

'What think you of my cousins?' said Edmonds to the midshipman, as they walked over the grounds after the carriage had driven off.

'It would be impossible not to think highly of them,' answered our hero; 'they would win the esteem of everyone. Which do you prefer?'

'Ann's gravity, if not in some measure affected, would render her the most valuable and enduring

for constant society,' returned Edmonds: 'but there is something so dependent, so fondly clinging to you for encouragement, in Amelia, that one cannot help loving her; when I look at her, she reminds me of the woodbine that requires training, sportively playing in every breeze, and snatching at all helps to make her very weakness strength by the aid of others. Such a heart as hers is dangerously situated as matters stand at present; villainy might extend itself to entrap her affections: and that aunt I do not—I never did like. Were you pleased with Miss Waldegrave?'

'I was delighted with her,' answered Tenthousand in an animated manner; 'she appears to be all amiability and beauty.'

'Take care you do not suffer her amiability and beauty to make any very deep impression on your regards, my young friend,' admonished Edmonds. 'Amelia tells me that her hand and large fortune are destined for her brother.'

Blocks experienced an unpleasant sensation as this was announced, and he was about to put some further questions to elicit explanation, when a friend of the captain's rode up the walk, and, after cordial greetings, they returned to the house, and the remainder of the evening was passed much more pleasantly than the young midshipman had anticipated. The fresh arrival had been a fellow-collegian of the captain's, who had taken holy orders, and through the general's interest and influence, backed by paid agency, had been presented with a decent living in the neighbourhood. He was younger than Edmonds; and to a mind nicely cultivated, nature had added a vivacity that rendered him a most pleasing companion. The general joined the party, and for three hours they enjoyed 'the feast of reason and the flow of soul.'

CHAPTER XII.

'If Misfortune comes, she brings along
The bravest virtues. And so many great
Illustrious spirits have conversed with woe,
Have in her school been taught, as are enough
To consecrate distress.'

THOMSON.

BLOCKS arose on the following morning invigorated and refreshed; and, after dressing himself, he descended to the grounds. The pure air was fraught with all those life-dispensing qualities that are so truly valuable to the invalid. Captain Edmonds and the parson had not yet risen; and he believed that the general was still in his bed, it not being more than seven o'clock. The youth went over the path which the day before he had trod with Miss Waldegrave; he called to remembrance their conversation, and then he shuddered at the immeasurable distance that opened like a gulf between them. Had he forgotten Eugenia? No! but sanguine wishes often delude the mind, and he brought himself to consider that he could not pay a greater respect to the memory of the departed, than to cherish affection for a female who so strongly resembled her both in person and in manners. Still, Edmonds had warned him against the indulgence of feelings and sentiments that could terminate only in disappointment.

The young midshipman took a retrospective view of the past, and his sorrowing spirit mourned that he knew not of one in the whole world to whom he could give the endearing epithet of 'relative.' He had friends—kind friends, it was true, and when all things were considered, Providence had by numerous strange coincidences introduced him into a profession and amongst individuals, that, probably, were his parents known to him, he should never have aspired to: but, on the other hand, ambitious thoughts would intrude, and suggest that Providence in its wisdom was leading him in the very track which he should have trod under his own proper circumstances, and thus was atoning for the cruelty of those who had evidently sought his life. The precepts which Mr. Hector had inculcated were never forgotten—he expressed and felt gratitude to Heaven for the kind dispensation of its bounty; yet the frailty of human nature would frequently overcome his patient endurance of hope deferred, and those longings and yearnings which sicken the heart when ungratified too surely told him that he was alone in the world; and gladly would he have resigned the distinction and honour he had experienced—cheerfully would he have sunk to humble but honourable obscurity, to hear the words 'My son' from the lips of a father or a mother.

From the first moment of his seeing the fair sisters, a something like envy crossed him that he was not their brother, particularly Amelia, whose gentleness and candour had greatly won upon his esteem. Never had he been so short a period in anyone's society, and formed such pleasing associations and connections with a prospect of the future; but how, or why, or wherefore, was a mystery to himself. The voice of Amelia was like one that he had often heard before, but memory could not tell him where; there was a sweet music in its tone that mingled harmoniously with the operations of his spirit, and he felt convinced that its counterpart had on several occasions soothed the turbulence and discord of tribulation; but in no single instance could recollection fix the time or occurrence. In the depth of his musings he had wandered near to the porter's lodge, when suddenly the gates receded on their hinges, flew open, and an elderly gentleman on horseback rode up to our hero.

'You are early astir, young gentleman,' said he, alighting and throwing the reins of the animal over his arm; 'but sailors seldom indulge themselves much with lying in bed when they are ashore.'

'Early as I am, sir, you appear to have had the advantage of me,' returned Blocks, eyeing with peculiar sensations the handsome countenance of the stranger, in which there was also a pensive look of melancholy. 'The morning is too beautiful to be wasted in indolence; and such an enchanting spot as this is not to be seen every day.'

'True—very true,' returned the stranger; 'the

general appears to have made the most of it, and he certainly has evinced a very refined taste; but, young gentleman, how soon will all these things pass away—or rather, how soon shall we have to leave all the treasured delight of our eyes behind us!'

'Yet, sir, with all due respect, I am of opinion, that improving the gifts of the Creator whilst we are on earth, is rather acceptable to Him who gave them than otherwise,' returned the midshipman.

The stranger looked at him intently for a moment, and then answered, 'Yet we should not set our best affections on the mere things of time: there are other and nobler pursuits, raising up the soul's devotion to the heavens, as mortals who have to put on immortality.'

'If I understand you right, sir,' said our hero, 'you do not, then, condemn the cultivation of natural taste or talent, but the inordinate employment of them, so as to drown all prospect of a future state?'

'You have anticipated my ideas to a miracle, my young friend,' returned the stranger in a tone of pleasure; 'but, at the same time, you have disappointed me.'

'I should deeply regret to have been the cause of vexation to anyone,' said our hero somewhat proudly, as if he felt the charge was not deserved; 'and much more to a visitor of General Edmonds, who commands my best respect; but——'

'Chalk! chalk!—Singleton! chalk, you old automaton!' roared a voice from the opposite side of the hedge. 'It takes you as much time to twist round that body of yours, as for a whole battalion to wheel into line.'

'That is the general, sir,' whispered our hero to the stranger.

'I conjectured it was,' returned the other; 'eternally planning and scheming; but he's a noble fellow, after all.'

'Three wheels and two quadrants,' said the general musingly; 'the machinery is complicated, and will not throw well either: I must contrive something else. Corporal, have you got my new twenty-four pounder in your pocket?'

'It is here, your honour,' returned the corporal, fishing up something from a pouch as capacious as a purser's bread-bag.

'And the catamaran for crossing rivers?' inquired the general.

'—Is here, your honour;' and up came something else, in shape not much unlike a kettle-drum, with a doll dressed like an artilleryman stuck in the middle.

'And the patent tackle, where is that?' continued the veteran.

'Down at the lake with the life-buoy, your honour,' responded Singleton; 'it has been there ever since the stable-lad was nearly drowned in trying it.'

'And the new grapnel for saving lives at shipwrecks?' inquired the general.

'Was lost in the lake when your honour tried the experiment and knocked away the ship's masts,' answered the corporal.

'Out upon you, ye old malignant!' said the general; 'the fault was yours in not laying the gun better. But about this bridge——'

'The one like the child's toy, your honour?' inquired the matter-of-fact corporal; 'perhaps them as made it might let us into some scheme. Now, your honour, suppose you was to have two sloping uprights?'

'Two what?' roared the general; 'what the devil do you mean by sloping uprights? it's a sheer anomaly, man.'

'Well, your honour, nomaly or not nomaly, may I speak?' inquired Singleton, well knowing the choleric temper of his master.

'Oh, ay, certainly—go on!' said the general: 'your wise head must, most assuredly, be stored with mechanical knowledge.'

'Fools mostly speak the truth,' responded the corporal; 'and had my advice been followed once afore, Drury Lane wouldn't have been drowned. First, sir, I'd lay the child's toy—I mean the bridge, on the bank of the ditch, all closed together and snug. At A and B—that's where this here drummer and this here fifer stands on the toy—well, there to each arm I'd have a piece of stout rope, the bight of which should pass through a small but strong ring, and the middle of the span attached to a tackle, the fall of which might be brought to a capstan made of one or more gun-carriage wheels; then a sloping upright on each side, secured by ropes, to project about one-third over the ditch, with light tackles to raise the bridge, whilst they heave on the capstan; then——'

'And whilst they are doing all this,' said the general, who had chalked down as the corporal went on, 'the enemy may be getting away or close upon their heels. No, no! I want something to shoot the bridge at once.'

'Not as your honour shot Westminster Bridge that time, and upset the boat, I hope,' observed the corporal in his dry manner.

A laugh from the stranger, as he pursued his way, stopped the expected current of the general's wrath, and the pair of oddities became apprised that they had been overheard. Blocks did not accompany the gentleman to the house, but, taking out his pencil and small drawing tablets, he placed himself in a position to sketch the building in which he had first seen Caroline. Whilst thus engaged, his thoughts deeply involved in the adventures of the preceding day, he did not become aware for some time that the stranger had rejoined him and was attentively looking over his shoulder at the performance. 'It is madness,—folly,—it will never do!' exclaimed our hero, as the supposed obscurity of his birth crossed his mind in juxta-position with Miss Waldegrave.

'I am of a different opinion,' said the stranger, in a tone that made Blocks start; 'the sketch is excellent—the elevation perhaps rather too lofty for the length of the ground-line. We must be better acquainted, young gentleman. I have a son in the service,' and the stranger sighed; 'he is not at home, or I should be proud to introduce you. The girls, however, are ex-

pecting Captain Edmonds, and, I believe, yourself; and so I rode over to persuade the general to join us.'

'Have I the honour to address the Earl of Wentworth?' said our hero, rising and respectfully bowing.

'It is but an empty honour, young gentleman,' returned the nobleman; 'but, such as it is, you may make the best of it;—I *am* Lord Wentworth.'

There was something so engaging in his lordship's manner, that from the first Blocks had felt attached to him. There are men in the world so fond of tranquillity and peace, that they risk the enjoyment of both by the very means which they take to obtain what they desire, and such a one seemed Lord Wentworth, by the account received from Caroline, who spoke of her guardian with a warmth of feeling and attachment that could only be grounded in sincerity.

'May I, without offending, inquire, my lord, to what you alluded a short time since, when you remarked that I had disappointed you?' asked Blocks.

'You have a right to a reply, young gentleman,' returned his lordship kindly, 'and you shall have it. From circumstances unnecessary to mention, much as I prize the naval service of the country, yet I have every reason to fear that the junior officers are generally in a very demoralized state. Thrown, when boys, upon the world without that restraint which the eye of a parent imposes, there is but little attention paid by the captain or lieutenants to their conduct, so that they are but attentive to duty: and I am the more surprised at this, as the seniors are mostly men of character and propriety.'

'It is but too true, my lord,' returned Blocks, still doubtful of the earl's meaning as applied to himself; 'morality is not much studied in a midshipman's mess: but I am pleased that your lordship admits that the captains and lieutenants, generally speaking, do honour to their profession. Am I not to understand you so, my lord?'

'Most assuredly, Mr. Blocks,' responded the earl: 'all with whom I have had the pleasure of being acquainted, or that have come within the sphere of my own observation, merit my best esteem.'

'And yet, my lord,' returned Blocks, with a smile of gratification, 'those very captains and lieutenants have all served their six years in the cockpit.'

'I am in some measure most gratefully rebuked,' answered his lordship, taking our hero by the hand; 'and you have, by your simple demonstration, instilled a hope into my heart that I will not cease to cherish. May the God of Heaven sanctify it with His blessing!' He paused a moment or two as if overcome by some powerful emotion, and then added, 'The disappointment to which I alluded, young gentleman, was to me a pleasing one; it proceeded from an impulse, if I may so call it—or rather a sudden conviction by your manners, that you had not yet imbibed the taint I have mentioned. Persevere, my young friend, in your profession, combine the gentleman and man of education with the straightforward honesty of the tar, and may Providence render you an ornament to your country!'

The deep pathos, combined with the musical voice in which this was uttered, thrilled upon the very heart of our hero, and brought the moisture to his eyes. There was a solemn earnestness in the delivery, an affectionate solicitude in the advice, that left an impression of the most happy kind in the breast of the young man—it was like the blessing of a father upon his child, and he determined to treasure its precepts through the remainder of his existence.

'Your lordship has almost overwhelmed me by your generous interest in my welfare,' returned Blocks, 'and I should indeed be ungrateful did I not endeavour to profit by your appeal.'

'Your father, Mr. Blocks, must be a man of good principles, to have instilled such views into his son,' said his lordship, aroused from something like deep contemplation. 'Is he in the service?'

'You touch me upon a tender point, my lord,' returned Blocks. 'Alas! I have no father; or if he be living, he is unknown to me.'

'I most sincerely beg your pardon, my young friend,' responded his lordship; 'yet, believe me, the question was not prompted by mere curiosity—the imperfections or frailties of parents ought not to be visited upon the children, and I should despise myself if I felt the slightest desire to cast reflections upon birth.'

Our hero did not exactly comprehend the tendency of the earl's observations, but he gathered sufficient from them to be aware that he imagined some cause of degradation on one side or the other had separated parent from child. 'I am satisfied my lord,' said he, 'that you did not—could not mean to pain me, and therefore, where there was no offence meant, no apology was requisite. Alas! my lord, though honoured by association with General Edmonds and your nephew—though wearing the uniform of my country—I have in reality no name, no parent, no place that I can call home!' For a few seconds his feelings mastered him, and he almost sobbed. 'I am an outcast, my lord. Left when an infant to perish in an open boat upon the waters, a generous seaman found me, cherished me, appropriated his hard earnings and his prize-money to my support and education—a worthy clergyman became my instructor and my friend. The seaman (whose name I bear) is now gunner of the frigate I have recently quitted on leave; and from the period of my first being picked up in Plymouth Sound down to the present moment, the perpetrators of the outrage, as well as the authors of my being, remain alike unknown to me. Thus, my lord, you have my brief history.'

'And it is one of strange and deep interest too,' returned his lordship, gazing with intense earnestness on the young man's countenance. 'Some one has much to answer for; whilst the gallant man you have mentioned will most assuredly reap his recompense either in time or in

eternity. I will hope, however, that in you his noble conduct will find a perfect reward, and that the mysterious event which flung you into his protection will yet receive an ample elucidation. But I must hear more of this, my young friend: I shall proceed to the metropolis in the course of a few days to pass the winter; you must come unreservedly to see me. I am but little known at court amongst the great officers of state, having passed the greatest portion of my life in retirement; but if there is anything I can do to forward you in life—— However, we will talk more upon this subject by-and-by; in the meantime, I would solicit a favour.'

'A favour from me, my lord!' reiterated Blocks with pleased surprise; 'what is there that I can do which your lordship may not readily command?'

'Well, well—we will not differ upon the choice of mere words,' returned the earl, smiling at the youth's readiness to comply; 'though favours and commands are widely distant from each other. Will you finish me a drawing of this delightful place, from the sketch you have just taken? I shall prize it, and 'twill serve me as a memorial of this morning's interview.'

'Most assuredly, my lord—it shall have my best exertions,' answered Blocks. 'I will bring it to your lordship in London, where I shall feel a grateful pride in waiting on you.'

The breakfast-bell terminated their conversation, and the party assembled in the parlour, where cheerfulness presided over the morning meal. Lord Wentworth's reception by the general had been cordial and brotherly, and though widely dissimilar in temper and pursuits, yet they always met upon the best of terms. There had been very little visiting between them, as the general did not much esteem the lady who held so dominant a sway over the family of his sister's children; still, he never forgot the latter—presents innumerable were constantly forwarded to the young ladies, and a distant friendly intercourse had been kept up. The age of his daughters had urged his lordship to pass some time in the metropolis, that they might have the benefit of the best instructors previous to their introduction into the busy world; the noble proprietor of Bellevue had offered it to his lordship till the town house was ready, and thus he had come within the vicinity of the Rumble-tumble.

At the close of the meal, the horses were ready; but Blocks, who had never rode on horseback in his life, was driven in the captain's gig by the young clergyman. The delighted girls met them near the Hall; the gentlemen dismounted: if any heart felt care and sorrow, they were thrown to the pleasant winds that breathed autumnal sweetness, and a happier party there could not well be. Amelia seemed to consider the attentions of Edmonds as more especially her own; the Reverend Mr. Saunders offered his arm to the Honourable Miss Ann with a politeness that could not admit of denial; and our hero was again by the side of Caroline. The brothers-in-law walked apart by themselves, and, from the frequency of their looks at him, Blocks conjectured that either himself or Miss Waldegrave was the subject of their conversation. Miss Alicia did not appear till the dinner-hour; but long before that, the young folks had come to something like an understanding of attachment. Amelia had passionately loved her cousin almost from childhood; and though his language and manners through that day had not given her any decided promise of a reciprocal feeling, yet they had revived a sanguine hope in her mind that he would one day be her own. The young clergyman found in Ann a judgment and taste at once clear and refined, far beyond what might have been expected in one who had lived in comparative seclusion; and she had experienced in her companion the scholar, the gentleman, and the pious Christian. Our hero and Caroline were more like brother and sister; they talked over past occurrences, present feelings, and future prospects, as if their intimacy had been one of years instead of hours. Past occurrences were, many of them, of a melancholy character. She, like poor Blocks, had no remembrance of the sweet balm of a mother's kiss—no recollection of the fond endearment of a father's smile: she was happy in her friends Amelia and Ann; but the proud, austere, and vengeful aunt called forth a strong indignant feeling. Ten-thousand related some of his early adventures; their sorrows, their pleasures, mingled together in either heart, and made the present feeling, if not one of entire and unbounded happiness, nevertheless rich in mutual commiseration, sympathy, and regard. As for the future, when did the eye of youth see it clouded over for any length of period? Oh no! there is the sunlight of hope, the brilliancy of expectation—the ardency which throws a brightness on things to come, turning doubt to certainty; all conspire to render the prospect delightful and full of joyous scenery. Not one word had been uttered of young Wentworth or his pretensions—Miss Waldegrave made no allusion to either the one or the other, and Ten-thousand forbore an inquiry that might dispel the sweet vision he had conjured up.

The dinner-party was more constrained. Aunt Alicia, however, endeavoured to make everything pass off agreeably, and therefore no real blame could be attached to her; but the fact is undeniable, that her presence produced an unnatural restraint upon all except Lord Wentworth, who, from long habit, felt more under something like right guidance when she was near him. His lordship was an indolent man, who disliked even the trouble of thinking; his sister had assumed a dominion over him by rendering herself necessary to his wants and wishes, and though he not unfrequently smarted under the inflictions of her petulance and pride, yet in the management of his affairs her arrangements were so judicious, and her attachment to his son so great, that the former weighed as nothing in the balance of his estimation when placed in competition with the latter. His lordship, however, knew but little of the petty tyrannies, the ill-natured annoyances and vexations, endured by the young

ladies through the overbearing and impetuous temper of their aunt.

Three or four days of pleasant communion followed this visit, when Captain Edmonds received a summons which demanded his presence in London as preliminary to his joining the regiment; and, as a matter of course, they returned to the metropolis, where, on the succeeding day, they were followed by the earl and his family, and the friendly intercourse which commenced in the country was renewed in town. Soon after their arrival, the captain quitted them for a few weeks, and Blocks received information that the frigate had come to Sheerness to refit, and his presence was required on board. Grateful for the indulgence that had already been extended to him, our hero nevertheless experienced much pain at the thoughts of parting with persons who had so materially dulcified the cup of life to his lips; still he could not hesitate a moment—much of his future expectations depended upon his present promptitude.

After acquainting the general, he hastened into Park Street to announce his intended departure to Lord Wentworth and the ladies. It was yet early, the morning was fine; the porter stood at the door, and our hero was about to pass him with a good-humoured nod and a friendly word, when the other respectfully bowed, and exclaimed, 'Not at home, sir!'

'Not at home!' repeated Blocks, who by his short residence amongst the fashionables had become apprised of the signification of the words; 'what, are his lordship and the ladies engaged?'

'Can't tell, sir—not at home,' responded the man, again bowing, and placing himself as it were accidentally in front of our hero to bar his further progress,

'That is, Robert, you mean they don't see company; but surely your orders don't extend to me?' said Blocks.

'Not at home, sir,' again uttered the porter with some degree of embarrassment, and without any of the insolence of office.

'There must be some mistake, I think, Robert, —I surely am not to be considered an exclusive,' said Blocks, deeply mortified, yet entertaining no doubt that all would soon be rectified. 'Will you send in my name?'

'Not at home, sir—not at home!' ejaculated the porter; 'such are my positive orders, sir, and I am forbidden to send in names.'

The pride of our hero would not let him question any further: there was an inexplicable something in the manners of the man he did not like. He knew that Lord Wentworth was governed by his sister, who had manifested a decided repugnance to the young midshipman; it might be by her commands, and if assured of that, he could not well present himself again; so that he preferred departing in doubt, and still cherishing the hope that the whole had originated in mistake. He made several calls on the individuals to whom Captain Yorick had given him letters, and then returned to Portman Square, where Corporal Singleton had already made preparations for him to leave town, and sundry cases of wines, pickles and preserves afforded information that the worthy housekeeper had not forgotten him.

'God bless you, Mr. Blocks!' said the corporal, as he smoothed down his glossy hair in front; 'I never know'd his honour taken with anybody so much in my life. Master Harry, too, seems to love you like a brother; and it's hard to tell which the general feels most 'cutish at parting with.'

'I have been nobly treated by all,' replied the youth; 'and to you, corporal, I am much indebted for many acts of attention;—will you accept—' and he held out his hand, containing gold.

'Not a copper, Mr. Blocks,—not a copper,' returned the corporal, rejecting the proffered gift. 'I have no need for money: the general provides sufficient of everything to satisfy me; but, if you'll not be offended, I'd beg one of them pictures of the Rumble-tumble, Mr. Blocks. I love that place, and wish his honour would fix his head-quarters there.'

'You shall have one, most certainly, corporal,' assented our hero; 'and when Captain Edmonds comes back, present him with the other in my name, tell him how grateful my heart is for all his many kindnesses, and assure him of my lasting esteem and respect.'

'I wool, Mr. Blocks, I wool,' uttered the corporal, aroused from his usual gravity by the fervency of the young man's acknowledgment. 'Master Harry, God bless him! is a fine officer and a good soldier; may God A'mighty make him a general! and may his father live to see it! Oh, how proud would it make his honour to have you both at his table, one a post-captain, and the other a major-general!' And the corporal stiffened into consequence, as if he himself would share the pride of his excellent master.

Blocks had indeed been treated with great distinction and consideration by the general. His accurate ideas of planning had rendered him somewhat useful to the veteran; but in return our hero had acquired a store of knowledge extremely valuable in his profession, where science is frequently required as much on shore as on board. The old chief took great pleasure in imparting information to one who so readily received it; and though he was sensible that it was requisite for both young men to attend most rigidly to their several duties, yet he could not but anticipate a degree of loneliness after their departure which was anything but pleasant in the contemplation.

The following morning Blocks again repaired to Park Street, and was hastening to the residence of the earl, when he observed a young officer in naval uniform descending the steps, and the next instant recognised his inveterate enemy Acheson. A sickening sensation passed through the heart of Ten-thousand,—he shuddered at the rencontre, and could not help thinking that the appearance of his old opponent was in some measure connected with the conduct of the porter on the previous day, yet how or why he could not tell. Acheson passed him without notice, and indeed apparently without seeing

him; and our hero, sensible that his conduct would bear the strictest scrutiny, knocked boldly at the door.

'Not at home, sir,' said the porter, half-closing the portal so as to prevent all ingress, as if he feared the young sailor would carry the place by storm.

'Is there no card—no note—no communication?' said Blocks. 'I have here a drawing for his lordship, which I wish to deliver to himself.'

'Not at home, sir,' repeated the man; 'you can leave the parcel if you please,—though in that, perhaps, I shall be exceeding orders.'

'This is extremely curious!' said Blocks, his heart almost bursting with mortification and disappointment, as that very afternoon he was to quit town. 'Are the orders his lordship's, or—'

'I am forbid to answer questions, sir,' returned the man; 'indeed, my directions were to— But that matters not: obedience is expected from servants, and I will obey; but nothing shall compel me to depart from humanity. I am sorry to say, Mr. Blocks, you have enemies at court.'

'Mr. Acheson,' said Blocks impatiently,—'he must be the person you mean.—a man whom I have never injured, but he has on all occasions sought to harm me:—is it not, Mr. Acheson?'

'I know no person of that name, sir,' returned the porter, still holding the open door in his hand. 'I have a good place here, Mr. Blocks, and I'm sure you're not the gentleman as would wish me to risk the loss of it by saying any more. I wish you well, sir, and there's others in the house that wishes you well; but I am only a servant, sir.'

'Only one word more, Robert, and I will put you to no further trouble. Has not Mr. Acheson but a few minutes since left the place?' inquired Blocks.

'I told you, sir, before, that I know of no such person, and I assure you no one of that name has either left his card or called to-day,' answered the porter.

Blocks would willingly have followed up the question, but he had promised to ask no more, and slipping half-a-guinea into the man's hand, he ran hastily down the steps, bewildered and almost heart-broken. He was moving quickly away, when he heard his name pronounced by the soft sweet voice of Caroline, who had seen him through one of the drawing-room windows and called upon him to return. Our hero bowed, but hesitated, and when he again looked up she was gone. With a desperate impulse he reascended the steps, knocked loudly at the door, and Robert, not expecting so speedy a return, at once threw open the portal. Our hero stood within the hall, his pride struggling to repress itself. 'Miss Waldegrave wishes to see me, Robert; she has just called to me from the drawing-room window.'

'I am sorry, Mr. Blocks, very sorry,' said the porter, approaching him, 'but my orders are imperative. Here you most assuredly must not remain, and I hope you will spare me doing that which I shall much regret.'

Blocks smiled in scorn; for though the porter was a stout muscular man, yet pampered luxury had reduced him in power to overgrown childhood; whilst Blocks, tall, well-made, and active, could have offered a formidable resistance to personal violence.

'You do not mean to lay your hands on me?' said the youth inquiringly.

'Such were my orders, sir,' returned the porter, bowing, 'if you attempted to enter without permission.'

'Touch me if you dare!' challenged Tenthousand, gathering himself into a defensive attitude: 'and, since it has come to this pass, I am determined to see his lordship or some of the family before I go.' He turned nimbly round, and with the speed of lightning darted up the stairs into the drawing-room. No one was there; but in a few minutes Aunt Alicia entered.

'Mr. Blocks, or whatever your name may be,' said she with vindictive bitterness, 'I order you to quit this house immediately. You may deceive General Edmonds, sir—you may practise on Lord Wentworth, or you may make the foolish captain your dupe, but you do not succeed with me: you are an impostor—the base-born child of some low warrant-officer, who palms you off as picked up at sea. Depart instantly, young man, and be grateful that I have spared you further disgrace.' At this moment Miss Waldegrave entered, and in tears. 'How now, miss,—how dare you intrude yourself unbidden!—retire instantly to your room.'

'I would reverence your years, madam,' said Caroline, 'I would respect you as the sister of my guardian, but you have no right to usurp authority over me. I have his lordship's sanction to receive my friends, amongst whom I class this young officer; nor will I submit to have those friends insulted.'

'Was there ever such matchless impudence!' ejaculated the aunt, approaching the bell. 'Will you go to your room, miss—and will you, sir, quit the house, before I expose the folly of both?'

'Take care, madam, you do not expose your own,' retorted Miss Waldegrave, who had now for the first time thrown off the control which habit alone had rendered her passive under. 'I am now in the metropolis, and amongst the friends of my departed parents, who will protect me, not only from you, but from the persecutions to which, I fear, I shall now be subjected by the return of Mr. Wentworth.'

'How!' exclaimed Blocks, interrupting her, 'has Mr. Wentworth arrived? He must and will do justice to a brother officer. I see it all: Acheson is his shipmate, and has abused his confidence.'

'Acheson!' repeated Miss Waldegrave; 'that is the old family name of the Wentworths, and his lordship's son was Charles Acheson.'

Had a thunderbolt been hurled at our hero, his senses could not have been more stunned, short of death, than by this announcement. He staggered to a sofa and fell prostrate, convulsively gasping for breath; the room and everything swam round with him, the blood seemed receding from his heart never to return. A

shriek escaped Caroline, who was instantly at his side and supporting his head.

'Do you want further evidence of the fellow's imposition?' scornfully exclaimed the aunt. 'He knows now the person he has named has exposed his nefarious tricks, and the wretch shrinks beneath the dread of punishment. Retire, Miss Waldegrave; such scenes are not befitting you.'

Blocks was not in a state of insensibility—he was fully conscious of all that was passing: the gentle pressure of Caroline's hand had an electric effect—the blood rallied back to his heart. His recovery was nearly as rapid as the blow—a maddening feeling of desperation aroused him—he rose up, approached the aunt, and, scarce knowing why or wherefore he did it, without being in the smallest degree aware that it was calculated to produce any effect, he hissingly whispered, 'Dubois yet lives: it is not long since I both saw and conversed with him.'

It was now the lady's turn to shrink. She stood for a moment staring wildly at the youth, as if expecting further communication; but he was there proudly silent, though his menacing eye seemed to speak volumes.

'Dubois,' said she, 'escaped alive, and——oh, God! what else, what else?'

'Grant me a few minutes' conversation with this young lady, and my lips are sealed,' returned our hero haughtily. 'Deny me, and I proclaim the traitor to the world.'

'A few minutes? they must be short—very short,' said the aunt, in a subdued tone. 'He will be back directly, and if you should meet—?'

'Grant my request, madam, and he is safe,' exclaimed Blocks, astonished at his own success. 'I do not wish to harm him, nor will I, except in self-defence.'

'You swear you will not touch him, or do anything prejudicial to his interests?' said the humbled lady.

'I will swear it,' returned Blocks contemptuously, 'if swearing alone will satisfy you; though the word of an honest man ought to be esteemed more than the oath of a villain.'

'I leave you then. Oh, God! what am I doing? to what depth shall I sink? I leave you—let your communication be short;' and she was about to quit the room.

'I will allow no ear-shots—no interruption,' said Blocks firmly, as the door closed. His voice instantly changed to tenderness. 'And now, Miss Waldegrave, to you I address myself, as my last hope in life. How I have acquired the blessing of an interview, I scarcely know; it is in a great measure to me wholly unaccountable, nor have I time to investigate it. Let me profit by my advantage, Caroline,' and he took her hand. 'Caroline! if to love you is a fault, I fear it is the only one of which I shall never repent. I quit London this afternoon to join my ship: say, will you think of me when I am away?—may I hope that——'

'Leave me to-day?' uttered the astonished girl. 'Can it indeed be possible? Oh, Mr. Blocks! I do indeed confess——' and she remained silent, whilst a deep blush suffused her cheeks.

'I call not for acknowledgments—I call not for confessions,' said our hero. 'We are both orphans; Fate has marked us out for the arrows of the archer; if you wish me to live for you—if you desire me to make you the mainspring of every honourable action of my existence, the actuating motive to win a gallant name and brave renown—here, here, young lady—my own Caroline!—here kneel with me, and give a solemn pledge before our Maker.'

In a moment both were kneeling. No words passed; their hands were linked together, their eyes were raised to Heaven; the tongue made no utterance, but a sacred vow was pledged in solemn silence: their arms entwined each other's neck; the binding kiss, as sealing the record, was exchanged;—the door burst open, and Acheson, or rather Mr. Wentworth, rushed into the room, followed by several servants with bludgeons. The rage of the intruder knew no bounds; he gnashed his teeth, he stamped his foot, but he did not dare advance.

'Seize on that vile miscreant!' exclaimed he to the servants; 'thrust him into the street, and do not spare your sticks if he resists. The bastard of a foremast-man, the scum and dregs of the service, presuming to enter polished society! Seize him, fellows, or by Heaven some of you shall feel the weight of my arm! Miss Caroline, quit the room.'

Blocks had sprung to his feet, and assisted his fair but abashed companion to rise also. He still held her hand, and drew himself up proudly as he faced his foes. His side-arms (a present from the general) hung in his belt, but he made no offer to touch the hilt.

'Acheson!' said he, 'why is it that you persecute me? I have done nothing knowingly to excite your anger or your malice.'

A torrent of furious oaths burst from the mouth of the young honourable.

'Am I to be preached to by a villain, a low-born wretch that heaped contumely and injury upon my head? Cowardly dogs! do you fear one poor boy?'

The calm, determined look of Ten-thousand, however, still held them aloof; for though he made no signs of touching his weapon, still they could not but know that it would require only the flight of a moment to draw it: besides, they naturally felt backward to try that which it was evident their master did not dare attempt.

'I know you now, Acheson,' said Blocks; 'for it would be ridiculous to call you Wentworth: you have none of their blood in your veins, none of their feelings in your heart.'

The individual addressed turned deadly pale, and the aunt at that moment entered.

'What is all this?' exclaimed she, trembling with agitation. 'Quit the room, fellows!' to the servants; 'by whose authority do you thus come armed about the house?'

'By my authority, madam,' answered Wentworth; 'and that, I believe, next to my father's must be paramount here. I want to teach that

sneaking villain'—Ten-thousand smiled in scorn —'to respect his superiors.'

'Be satisfied, Wentworth,' said the lady; 'send the men away. Hear me, fellows! leave the room;' and her voice mounted to the pitch of screaming.

'They shall not go without my sanction,' persisted Wentworth doggedly; 'though every soul shall be discharged for their cowardice in not obeying my orders to turn out that crawling serpent.'

'Marry, if it's come to that, sir,' said one of the men, 'I'm thinking there's not much bravery lost between us. The young gentleman has given no offence to any but yourself; why don't you lay hold of him first? For my part, if this is to be the new rule of the house, there goes my stick—I'll have none of it.' He pitched it before him, so that it rolled to our hero's feet, and Caroline intuitively stooped and placed the weapon in his hand.

'Strip off your livery, sir!' shouted Wentworth, in a voice of overpowering rage, as he foamed at the mouth.

'That I'll do, sir, in a minute,' returned the man; 'I'll never wear the robes of anyone that I'm compelled to despise:' and he walked away.

The other servants, fearing that their places were in jeopardy, now made a show of advancing upon Blocks, who firmly kept his ground, one hand grasping the cudgel, the other clasped in Miss Waldegrave's: his eye was cautiously fixed. 'These dastards will attack me, Caroline,' said he in a tone of tenderness; 'do not fear, love, but retire—danger to you would unnerve me. I am ready for them—stand back, my dearest love!' They still came on: Blocks poised his stick; but Wentworth had drawn his dirk, and his ferocious eye seemed searching out a spot to make a deadly blow, when the aunt and Caroline rushed between them. Wentworth sprang forward, but was foiled in his murderous purpose by his opponent, who dexterously struck the weapon from his hand, and it flew across the room, leaving him defenceless; but our hero did not follow up his stroke. In vain the aunt entreated, commanded, and even added blows; the mettle of the fellows was aroused, and they thought of the disgrace of being conquered by a mere youth. They cautiously advanced to make one rush, when, to increase the confusion, Amelia and Ann entered the drawing-room, uttering loud shrieks. Blocks saw the impossibility of getting off without a few blows, and, watching his opportunity, he levelled one of his opponents to the ground; the others instantly closed in upon him; his head was ringing with a crack from one of their sticks, when the tall gaunt figure of the corporal strode in, and, knocking the fellows down with the same ease as he would level nine-pins, he stood triumphant.

Our hero, notwithstanding his pain, had too fine a sense of the ludicrous not to enjoy the coolness and gravity with which Singleton accomplished his task, and then, drawing himself erect, saluted the ladies with a military flourish of his hand to his cap. A shriek from Amelia, however, made the young man suddenly turn round—it probably saved his life, for the knife of his deadly foe remained sticking in his arm. The corporal caught the delinquent by the collar—he raised him off the ground, twisted him round, and, contemptuously exclaiming, 'Faugh!' hurled him to the other end of the room, where the wretch lay stunned and bleeding: he then turned to Blocks, and pulling the knife from his arm and tying his handkerchief round it, said, "His honour has sent me for you, sir.'

'Most grateful am I for your timely rescue, corporal,' returned Blocks; 'yet I fear you have done some mischief there,' pointing to his enemy.

'A kiss from the old woman and a bit of plaster will cure it, sir,' answered the corporal.

Blocks walked towards the prostrate young man, whose head was now pillowed on the bosom of his aunt, as she raised him in her arms and applied her smelling-bottle to his nostrils. 'I have faithfully kept my word, madam,' said he, 'and now bid you farewell. The secret is in my keeping—take care you do not compel me to use it for my own safety.'

'Go, go!' shouted she; 'you have killed my boy—you have killed him! go—go! and oh that I may never see your face again!'

'My dear young ladies,' said Blocks, addressing the sisters, 'your brother must and ought to be dearer in your esteem than a mere stranger. I do not ask you even to think well of me; all I claim at your hands is common justice.—For you, Miss Caroline,' and he took her hand,—'for you my prayers, my best wishes, my most ardent affection, shall ever be unchanged. Happier times will come, they must,—and it is not impious to say, they *shall*.—I deeply regret, young ladies, what has taken place. The porter forbade me the house yesterday morning, and repeated it this. I could obtain no explanation. I was going away dejected and sorrowful, when Miss Caroline called me back. I returned, and Robert would have opposed me; but I persevered, and unhappily this has been the result. It was not of my seeking; dear ladies, do me justice when I am gone.' He bowed gracefully and left the room, followed by Miss Waldegrave and the corporal. 'Do you repent your vow, Miss Caroline?' whispered he.

'No—no, never,' returned she, as the tears overflowed her eyes; 'but promise me that you will contrive every opportunity to see me—I will not submit to be domineered over as I have been.'

'May I write?' whispered the young midshipman, as he held her hand at the top of the stairs, whilst the corporal remained at a respectful distance; 'and will you answer my letters?'

'Yes—yes, both,' replied she. 'Yet—no; it requires some consideration. You shall hear from me before long.'

'I will be with you in a moment, corporal,' said Blocks; and the veteran descended the stairs, leaving them alone. 'And now, Caroline, one last—one fond embrace! Oh! do not—do not forget me! the certainty of your regard will sustain me under every trial, will prompt me to every exertion. Should Acheson persecute or

insult you, I have a talismanic power over his aunt—ay, and over himself, that must check them :—only—only let me know, and I will not fail to hasten to your aid.'

They parted, and Blocks joined the corporal, who was waiting for him in the street, and as they proceeded onward, drew up in his rear. The young midshipman could not talk—his heart was too full ; but on turning the corner of the street he observed the general waiting for him in the carriage. The steps were let down, Ten-thousand got in, the corporal took his seat by the coachman, the footman jumped up behind, and off rolled the vehicle.

'Pray, young gentleman, where and how did you become acquainted with Mr. Wentworth?' inquired the general.

'You have heard me speak of a brother officer who treated me with indignity and endangered my life in the *Scratchee*,' returned our hero. 'I did not mention names, sir, as I am always desirous of avoiding the means of casting a personal stigma upon anyone. Mr. Wentworth, I find, was the individual ; though then I only knew him by the name of Acheson.'

'The young scoundrel!—to think to practise upon an old soldier, too!' muttered the general to himself ; and Blocks felt painfully uncertain as to which of them the epithet was applied. His doubts, however, vanished as the veteran continued. 'He did not dare to carry his threat into execution, though, I hope?—Ah! what is that, young man?—the blood is running down your hand—your arm too is bandaged, and—eh?—' The carriage suddenly stopped. 'Why, what's this for?' He looked out, and read upon a door-plate, in large letters, 'Hamilton, Surgeon.' 'Really, that Singleton is worth his weight in gold!'

'He has done me especial service to-day, sir,' said Blocks : 'I wish you could have seen him capsizing three stout fellows one after the other, and laying them sprawling on the floor!' The steps were let down, and our hero and the general alighted and entered the residence of the skilful practitioner. The wound was found to be deep, and, as misfortunes seldom come single, it was just upon the spot where the pistol-shot had passed about fourteen months before : the surgeon dressed it, and advised caution and relief from mental anxiety, lest inflammation should ensue and render amputation necessary ; for the arm had swelled prodigiously, and lock-jaw might be induced.

'I was going to the Admiralty,' said the general : 'but perhaps it would be better to return immediately to Portman Square.'

'Rest would certainly be best,' replied the surgeon ; 'but it must be of mind as well as of body, sir. If your visit to the Admiralty is any way connected with the young gentleman's mental enjoyment, I would advise the ride by all means, but not otherwise.'

'You think too seriously of the hurt, sir, I am afraid,' said our hero to the practitioner : 'I feel but little inconvenience from it.'

'You will experience more before long,' responded the surgeon. 'This wound is too severe for a chance-wound—it has been given when the blood was probably high and boiling on both sides ; your face is strongly marked with recent agitation—nay, at this very moment you are labouring under great mental suffering, or my experience deceives me. Have you the weapon with you?'

'It is here, sir,' said the corporal, pulling out by mistake the general's four-and-twenty pounder. 'No, that's not it—there it is, sir ;' and he produced a long clasp-knife of the stiletto kind, a spring and catch at the back rendering the blade immovable.

'A formidable instrument for blood-letting, truly!' said the surgeon ; 'but the aim was for a more vital part than the arm.'

'The villain!' uttered the general between his compressed teeth ; 'did he escape unscathed?'

'No, your honour, not exactly,' replied the corporal ; 'I must confess I did scatter him a bit ;' and a smile played upon his grim features.

'Captain Yorick is in town, my young friend,' said the general, addressing Blocks—'he is to be at the Admiralty this morning, and I wished to obtain a day or two's extension of your leave. Shall we go to him?'

'Would it not be trespassing upon his indulgence, sir,' returned Blocks, 'to ask for longer leave?—he might feel offended.'

'And what could you do on board with that arm?' said the general, peevishly ; 'do you wish to see your captain?'

'It will afford me pleasure, sir,' answered Blocks ; 'but would it not be better to say nothing about the wound? Captain Yorick knows my enemy well, and there are circumstances which would possibly render an explanation rather awkward.'

'Leave it to me, young man, leave it to me,' returned the general ; and presenting his card to the surgeon, they wished him 'Good morning,' and entering the carriage, drove off to the Admiralty. During the ride, the veteran informed our hero that Wentworth had called upon him, and artfully introduced the subject, making insinuations against poor Blocks, and at length openly declaring that he was an impostor, and one who had suffered punishment for writing abusive letters to his captain ; that he had attempted his nephew's life, and, he subsequently understood, had deserted from the service ; in short, a tissue of falsehoods had been wove from a few shreds of fact : but the general saw through the devices of the young man, though he seemed to acquiesce in all he said, determined to sift the matter to the bottom. Soon after his departure, a note from Captain Yorick informed the general of his arrival in the metropolis, and his intention to call, but business at the Admiralty would detain him till three o'clock. Upon this hint the veteran acted ; the carriage was ordered, and the result has been shown.

'You shall have justice done you, young man,' said the general, sternly : 'no relationship of mine shall screen a foul assassin. True, he is my sister's child : but had he been my own son—

thank God—thank God, he is not! but if he was, they should find me firm in my duty to my country.'

On arriving at the Admiralty, General Edmonds obtained an immediate interview with Captain Yorick in the First Lord's private room. He mentioned the incident that had just occurred to Blocks, and made inquiries relative to his previous conduct.

'That youth has a strange fatality attending him,' said Yorick, 'he is always in some scrape; and, take my word for it, he'll one day or other get to the mast-head—that is, if his neck is not broke through a rotten rattlin.'

'You had a youngster with you in the *Scratchee* of the name of—let me see—Acheson, I think?' said the general, in a tone of half-inquiry.

'Yes, I had,' returned Yorick in an instant, for his memory was excellent; 'I remember the fellow well—a sort of devil's sister's son—but a d—— deal more like his uncle than his mother.'

This was a wipe the veteran did not expect; but he felt certain that it was unintentional, and the reply therefore only drew forth a smile as he mentally acknowledged he merited the punishment for practising deception. 'In fact, Captain Yorick,' said he, 'that young man is my nephew; but——'

'— You were ashamed to own him, general—it is just what I should expect from you,' returned Yorick. 'Tell his father to bind him apprentice to a man-milliner or a tailor,—he wouldn't have brains enough to turn cuckoo-clock maker,—for by —— the service would be disgraced by such a lubber!—Blocks? Blocks would twist him round his finger, like a cooper round a cask! Keep the fellow from coming athwart my hawse, for I have a small account to settle with him.'

'He is my sister's son, Captain Yorick,' said the general somewhat deprecatingly, and feeling at the moment disgraced in the person of his nephew: 'nevertheless, I am determined to see young Blocks redressed. He has suffered grievous wrong from him—vile calumny, insult and injury, and ——'

'Tush! let it rest, general—let it rest!' responded the straightforward Yorick; 'whoever fights with a sweep, runs a chance of getting smothered with soot. Leave Acheson to punish himself; and that he will do before long, or I'm sadly out in my reckoning.—But Blocks—where is he?'

'In the ante-room, waiting to pay his respects to you,' answered the general, not a little pleased that the captain had taken the view of the case he had.

'Have him in by all means,' said Yorick. 'He has done quite right to come; for as he expects to join to-morrow, I may have orders to send down. Is his hurt—' the general shook his head: 'Eh! not serious, I hope?'

'The surgeon insists upon quietness of mind,' returned the veteran; 'and, indeed, to keep him tranquil, I brought him hither.' He opened the door, and an attendant summoned the young midshipman.

'Well, Mr. Blocks,' said Yorick as he entered, 'almost tired of the shore, eh? For my own part, I don't see the use of so much land—there's more than is requisite to grow gooseberries. The general tells me you've got into some affray again,—a second Acheson affair.' The youth stared, for he was not aware that his commander was acquainted either with past or recent occurrences; and, indeed, the allusion was one of those chance-hits which Yorick so frequently made, for he was totally ignorant that Acheson had inflicted the wound. 'How did it happen, sir?'

Our hero looked at the general, and saw embarrassment pictured on his countenance; but the veteran was too noble-minded to leave the youth in a dilemma. 'The truth must be told, Captain Yorick,' said he; 'it is, in fact, that very Acheson who has caused the young man's arm to be thus bandaged.'

A flush of indignation passed over the manly features of the young captain. 'I must have the whole of this explained, general,' said he: 'my youngsters look to me for protection, as much as they do for instruction in their duty, and by —— they shall have it too!'

'I honour your feeling, Captain Yorick,' returned the general; 'but the present unfortunate affair does not alter your previous position, as to leaving Acheson to be his own castigator.'

'The devil it doesn't!' exclaimed Yorick impatiently: 'it's a matter worth consideration though, and we've barely time to hear ourselves think just now. Have dinner ready by four o'clock, and I'll dine with you, general: Mr. Blocks may defer his journey till the day after to-morrow, and then we can travel down together.' The young midshipman bowed. 'We'll overhaul from clew to earring at our wine.'

'I shall expect you, then,' said the general; 'and rest assured, Captain Yorick, from what I have seen of your young officer, you cannot be more interested in his welfare than I am.'

'Four o'clock shall be the hour,' returned Yorick; 'excuse my remaining longer—the First Lord is as busy as a certain old gentleman in black during a gale of wind.'

They immediately drove back to Portman Square, where they found that Captain Edmonds had arrived during their absence, though he was not then in the house. Blocks laid himself upon a sofa in the breakfast-room, and for a short time his wearied and over-excited spirit found repose in sleep: from this state he awoke much refreshed, with the voice of Edmonds sounding in his ears.

'Halloo, my tight young sailor!' exclaimed the captain; 'what! battling the watch again, as you tars call it! You've a strange fortune, Blocks; but come, I've prepared a surprise for you: Lord Wentworth is off—his precious son is off—Miss Alicia is off—and as my regiment is lying in the neighbourhood of his lordship's estate, I'm to have the honour of escorting the ladies down, where they all mean to remain till this affair has blown over.'

'And Miss Waldegrave?' inquired Blocks anxiously: 'I fear my impetuosity must have caused her great uneasiness this morning.'

'She is with my cousins in Park Street,'

answered the captain, smiling; 'and as for your impetuosity, as you call it, every one—even Miss Alicia spoke of your conduct in terms of approbation, though I am convinced she hates you as thoroughly as ever woman hated in this world. You have stirred up a pretty coil, however, my fine fellow! But I would really have given a trifle to have seen the corporal spreading those gentry with as much gravity as if he'd been using his chalk at the Rumble-tumble. I have heard all about it. How is your arm—do you feel much pain?'

'A little stiff and soreish,' returned Blocks. 'Have you seen your father?—do you know that Captain Yorick dines here to-day?'

'Yes, I have seen my father, and know everything,' answered Edmonds; 'but how, in the name of all that's tragical or comical, came you and Caroline to be on your knees together?'

'With you, Captain Edmonds, I will never use disguise or concealment, especially as I am perfectly satisfied my confidence will remain unbroken on your part,' returned Blocks. 'You remember the town-major of Rotterdam?'

'I do,' replied the captain quickly; 'the uncivil fellow who kept us waiting in his ante-room. I also remember you telling me of some circumstances connected with his being a prisoner of war in England, and several other particulars. A——h,' and the officer drew a long breath, 'I see it now: the midshipman whom you supposed to have connived at his escape was——'

'Acheson—or Wentworth—which you please,' added Blocks; 'but I was totally ignorant of their identity till this morning.' He then repeated what had taken place, in a plain unvarnished manner, from the period of the first denial by Robert, the porter, down to the conflict with the servants in the drawing-room: he then continued, 'I had heard from you, that your male cousin was almost idolised by his aunt; and that induced me, in a moment of desperation, to repeat the name of Dubois to her, though without the slightest expectation that it would produce the consequences it did. No doubt, her womanish fears led her to believe that I should betray the young man to the vengeance of the laws, and her alarm jumped to some horrible conclusions; for to no other cause can I attribute the sudden change which took place, from the highest elevation of unnatural pride, to the extreme degradation of abject terror.'

'You were wrong, Blocks—extremely wrong, to make the proposition you did to Caroline,' said Edmonds, in a tone of mild rebuke. 'I can make allowance for the impetuosity of the moment; but you were under the roof of her guardian, where you had been kindly treated. I had warned you that she was considered—and I believe there is some legal engagement which cannot well be got over—I say, I warned you that she was looked upon as part of the family property: besides—and you must excuse my being plain with you—there is yet a great disparity in your stations in society. Believe me, my young friend, I have no wish to taunt, but, from your own showing, there has not been that discretion and nobleness of purpose which I once trusted would govern all your acts.'

'I feel the rashness—the inconsiderateness of my behaviour,' responded Blocks: 'it was the madness of the moment—the impulse of desperation. I feel that I am poor, Captain Edmonds, when placed in competition with the extreme wealth of Miss Waldegrave. As for birth, I have as much right to claim a noble for my father, as others to assign me a pauper. There are feelings struggling in my breast on that score. A poor man could have no motive for getting rid of me—a rich man might; but, poor or rich, I must work my own way, and, by God's blessing, I will neither turn traitor to disgrace a humble name, nor commit any dishonourable act that may bring shame upon one that is more elevated in rank. As for my station, it is one the son of a king, who may some day be a king himself, has held, and served his time in: every brave admiral in his Majesty's Fleet has done the same. Look at my own commander, than whom a more noble and gallant man there does not exist—look at Nelson, at his bold compeers; all, Captain Edmonds, have worn this uniform which it is now my pride to wear: what remains for the future to effect, the future itself must show. I feel, sir, that there was something wrong in my interview with Miss Caroline, this morning, though I cannot exactly define what; and as you have been plain with me, Captain Edmonds, so must I be plain in return. I knew nothing of legal engagements between the families: I loved Miss Waldegrave—ay, by Heaven! and *will* love her still; for she shall be the pole-star to regulate my future course—she shall be the guiding motive to all my honourable exertions—the light of hope and life, and fame and honour:—I repeat, sir, that I loved Miss Caroline; and surely I may be allowed—poor and lowly as I am, I say, I may be allowed at least a level—' he raised his voice—'A level, do I say? Now God forbid that I should be sunk in treachery and error down to the level of the—the person who this morning meditated murder, and left his knife sticking in my arm!' And Blocks arose from the sofa and traversed the room.

'You are labouring under mistake, my young friend, if you suppose that my observations were caused by any other feeling than an earnest desire for your welfare,' said the captain. 'You are yet but very young, and therefore every excuse must be made for you—at least, by me. You will think differently by-and-by.'

'Never, Captain Edmonds, never!' responded our hero with unusual firmness. 'I have admitted my fault; but even that very fault shall be to me a source of honest pride. I cannot recall it. Young as I am, and young as Miss Waldegrave is, there is a mutual feeling in our hearts; and as I cannot recall——'

'—You will persevere in wrong,' said the captain, catching up the thread of his sentence, and twisting it to his own meaning,

'Why should you think unjustly of me?' re-

turned Ten-thousand. 'No, Captain Edmonds, no! again I repeat, I cannot recall what has taken place, rash as it was; but henceforward it shall be my study, my life's endeavour, to make myself worthy of the honour that has been conferred upon me. No one shall say that they have condescended to stoop to my level—but that I have at least tried to raise myself to theirs.'

'A noble resolve,' said Yorick, entering the room, 'and one it shall be my pride to back you in. There's two ways, young man, by which patronage may be extended: one is, by the gentle guidance of the hand; the other, by an occasional set in the stern. But, where's the general?'

'You will find him in the library, Captain Yorick,' said Edmonds; and ringing the bell, a servant was directed to show this strange mortal to what he called 'the magazine.' As soon as he was gone, the young officer stretched forth his hand to Blocks and uttered, 'Your purposes I well know; they are just and upright, and must succeed in a service where merit ever makes its way. But have you thought of the inconveniences to which your conduct may expose Miss Waldegrave—the persecutions she will probably have to endure—the heart-burnings that may be excited?'

'I have thought of everything, Captain Edmonds, before to-day, and determined to bury my feelings in my own breast,' returned our hero, who had taken and pressed the offered hand. 'I knew from the intimation that you gave me that she was destined, or supposed to be destined, for Mr. Wentworth, and silence should have sealed my lips for ever on the subject of one so unworthy as myself; but when in Mr. Wentworth I saw and knew the unprincipled Acheson, it changed the current of my thoughts; it—in short, it produced what has taken place, and let time justify the event or not, my aim shall be the same. We are, as I said before, both young—very young; I am not yet seventeen; but Miss Waldegrave shall never have to blush that she owned her regard for a —a—well, have the nautical term,' and he laughed, 'a poor reefer.'

'This little spurt, Blocks, shall not disturb nor mar our friendship,' said the generous Edmonds; 'but I hope it will act as spur to the energies of both. I cannot claim much seniority in years, it is true, and perhaps still less in experience. I have known what it was—ay, still know what it is to love: but it is folly to talk any further on the subject. Pursue your plan, my jolly sailor: we perhaps may meet in that land of romance—the East, and then we can talk tamely and soberly of that which is distant. At all events, my best wishes will attend you. Try and win the royal Caroline, if you will; act upon right principles towards those you esteem——'

'—And d— the French!' exclaimed Yorick, re-entering in company with the general. 'Why, Edmonds, you are turning Mentor! and I hope Mr. Blocks will profit by your advice. I want a chaplain; and though I cannot ordain, I can give you an acting order.'

'Many thanks for your good intentions,' returned Edmonds; 'but I must beg leave to decline the office. And now allow me, Captain Yorick, in the presence of my father, to tender you my grateful acknowledgments for the generous kindness I experienced on board your frigate.'

'Tut! tut!—nonsense, man!' responded Yorick. 'I require no acknowledgments—it would be a libel on the service; for I am confident there's not a captain in it but would have done the same, though a soldier is considered a sort of lubber at sea, eh, general?'

'I have had my share of rough weather on the ocean, Captain Yorick,' said the general: 'two voyages I have made to India; and the Cape—'

'And the Flying Dutchmen are the very devil, general!' interrupted Yorick. 'Ah! "they that go down to the sea in ships," you know,—must necessarily ship a great deal of sea.'

A servant in splendid livery announced dinner, and they adjourned to the dining-room, where an exquisite repast was served up, the corporal, like a tent-pole, standing perpendicularly behind his master's chair. When the cloth was removed and the dessert served up, the servants withdrew, and the subject of our hero's adventure in the morning was revived, which led to a request from his commander that he would give him an outline of what occurred to him whilst absent in Holland.

'But you must write it out, young gentleman; let me have it in black and white: you can write letters, you know! What do you think, general? he once had the presumption to quiz my legs!'

'He did not take them off, at all events,' said Captain Edmonds, laughing, 'so that, so far, his quiz was harmless. But there is something extremely romantic in his adventures, Captain Yorick; and as we have both been companions in misfortune, why, he may couple his remembrances of both in the same account.'

'Thank you, Captain Edmonds, I will not fail to do so,' returned Blocks, 'and will take the earliest opportunity, sir, of compiling my brief memoirs for your perusal.'

'Ay, ay, young man! but remember the advice I once gave you,' responded Yorick: 'and let your memoir be accompanied by some water-colour sketches by way of illustration; they will help my memory at a pinch. Go and get your paper ready.'

An interesting conversation ensued after Blocks had quitted the table, in which Yorick, in his quaint and eccentric manner, displayed much of the natural goodness of his heart. He declared his determination to do all in his power to forward the young man's prospects in life, and expressed a conviction that his exertions would do him credit, as, from all that he had seen of our hero, he was satisfied that he would be an honour to the service. On his return to the room, Blocks was desired to hold himself in readiness to go down to the ship the next day but one.

The following day was passed in quiet repose. The surgeon visited him, and finding the wound going on very favourably, made no objection to

his return on board. Captain Edmonds took his departure in the afternoon to escort his fair cousins to the Isle of Wight; and he gave our hero an assurance that he would do nothing to prejudice him in the estimation of Miss Waldegrave during his short visit, as that young lady was to remain in town. They parted with pledges of mutual regard and kind feeling, promising to correspond on every opportune occasion. From the general our hero received many solid tokens of esteem; and previous to retiring to his room for the night, they passed an hour together in unrestrained chat, during which the veteran made the youth acquainted with many little circumstances connected with his own younger days, and related numerous anecdotes of his family connections incidental to the narrative, as well as a brief sketch of the occurrences that deprived Miss Waldegrave of her parents,—all which will be found detailed at greater length in another part of our tale.

CHAPTER XIII.

'I saw him beat the surges under him
And ride upon their backs; he trod the water,
Whose enmity he flung aside, and breasted
The surge most swol'n that met him: his bold hand
'Bove the contentious waves he kept, and oar'd
Himself with his good arms on lusty stroke
To the shore.'

The Tempest.

AT the time appointed, Blocks accompanied his commander, who having something to do at the Admiralty, had determined 'to take his departure' from that point. Leaving Blocks in the carriage, he entered the building; and a few minutes afterwards, whilst looking out at the window of the vehicle, our hero caught sight of a well-remembered face, and giving a friendly hail, his hand was soon grasped by his former messmate, little Parker.

'Oh, Mr. Blocks, how happy I am to see you!' said the youngster. 'But they said you were drowned; when did you come to life again?'

'Jump in, Parker, and I'll tell you all about it,' replied Blocks, holding out his hand. 'There now, sit down, and ask me no questions, but give me plain answers. Why have you that crape round your hat?'

The tears started to the boy's eyes, and his struggles to repress them were vain. 'It is mourning for my mother?' replied he.

'And what ship do you belong to now?' inquired Ten-thousand, as he deeply sympathised with the little fellow's affliction.

'I belong to no ship now,' answered Parker mournfully: 'and my uncle, who is one of the under secretaries here, says he cannot get me one, as he wants all the interest he can muster for his own son—and he can't afford to keep me in clothes and mess.'

'You must have had some prize-money due?' observed Blocks; 'is it all gone?—what has become of it?'

'—My mother's long illness,' answered the boy, the tears again trickling down his face.

'I am an orphan now; no money and no friends—no parent and no home.'

'And do you wish to quit the sea?' inquired Blocks, as he felt a strong inclination to join in the relieving influence of tears.

'Oh, no, no, no!' returned the youngster, with a sincerity of expression that could not be mistaken. 'What with the loss of my poor mother, and being compelled to leave the service, I fear my heart will break!'

'One more question, Parker,' said our hero; 'and I expect you will give me a faithful and correct answer. Can any one say a word against your character?'

A deep flush spread over the boy's cheeks, that immediately dried up his tears, and looking proudly at Ten-thousand, he replied, 'Do you mean to insult my misfortunes, Blocks? No, thank God, I never disgraced the colour of the cloth, or committed one act that my poor dear departed mother had cause to blush for her child. I did not expect this from you!' His firmness gave way, and he wept to agony.

'We shall be observed,' said Blocks, 'unless you can keep more restraint upon yourself. Come, come, Captain Yorick will be here directly.'

The very name had a talismanic effect on the sorrowing lad; he looked up; a ray of hope seemed to be already kindling in his heart—a light like the faint glimmering of a star, to the lost traveller on the desert waste, or to the lone mariner in the tempestuous sea, broke in upon him. 'Do you think he will give me a berth?' Sadness again intervened. 'But I have no money for outfit or for mess.'

'Make your mind easy upon that score,' requested Blocks: 'we must do what we can about the outfit and the mess; the only question is, whether Captain Yorick can find room, or will take you.'

At this moment the individual himself appeared, leaning on the arm of a master and commander, in whom Blocks immediately recognised the late first-lieutenant of *Le Cerf*, Mr. Tonguings, who, through the interest of Yorick and the affair of the Dutch frigate, had gained a step in promotion. Parker jumped out of the carriage, and, half smiles, half tears, touched his hat to his superiors. Yorick was in earnest conversation with Captain Tonguings, and took no notice of the salute beyond a nod; but his quick, piercing eye had caught sight of the youngster's features, and when the two commanders parted, the little fellow heard his old captain's voice as it thrilled with pleasure on his heart.

'So, Mr. Parker, you're not too proud to notice your old skipper, eh!' said Yorick. 'And how has fortune used you, sir?—Lots of prize-money, and so forth?'

'He has lost his mother, sir,' said Blocks, observing that the boy's heart was too full to speak, 'and he wants a ship.'

'Poor fellow!' uttered Yorick, looking with deep earnestness at the lad, 'poor fellow!—an orphan! But your uncle——'

'Cannot provide for me, sir,' answered the boy, almost overpowered with emotion; 'but

Mr. Blocks says he will lend me a hand if——' and he suddenly stopped.

'If I'll give you a rating, eh? isn't that it, Mr. Parker?' and Yorick's face beamed with benevolence and generosity. 'Why, you must have known, sir, so important a personage as yourself must command attention from me. Whom are you with in London?'

'I have been remaining with my uncle, sir, since my mother's death,' answered Parker, hope again irradiating his countenance.

'And what is your uncle?' inquired the captain with a smile; 'is the house far off, or within a league or two?'

'He is in his office here, sir; I was just going to him, sir, to say I'd rather go out before the mast and try my fortune than stop ashore,' replied Parker.

'Conduct me to him, young gentleman,' said Yorick, waving his hand for the lad to take precedence. The glass doors swung on their hinges, and they passed through into the vestibule.

Blocks sat for some time in deep rumination on the past, when he was suddenly aroused from his musings by observing an elderly man in a warrant-officer's dress, but one arm carried away, dodging about the carriage and eyeing him most intently from every point, sometimes shading his ogles from the sun by placing his hand above his brow, then holding his head on one side, and during the whole process muttering to himself, 'Well, I'm —— but it bothers me, anyhow!'—'Two sister blocks were never more alike.'—'And yet it can't be, for he went overboard, sartainly,'—and a many such like expressions. Blocks at length recollected the veteran, whose dress had made a considerable alteration in his appearance, to be his old friend Jem, the quarter-master of the *Scratchee*, who was on board the Dutch prize with him.

'What are you looking at so earnestly, friend?' said Blocks superciliously, in an assumed voice, to try the old man's temper: 'did you never see a naval officer before?'

'Why, ay, yer honour,' answered the tar, 'I knows a cockroach from a crab, and a greenhorn from a marlin-spike. I hopes no offence.' He muttered to himself, 'No, I'm out in my latitude o' the thing! He I'm thinking on would never have hail'd an ould shipmate in that 'ere no-man's-land sort of a fashion!' He was moving away shaking his head, and a porter following him with a bag and a bundle. 'No, Lord love him! he's moored ship among the saints and angels in Glory bay!'

The tardy tar had got past the carriage, when Blocks in his own proper voice sung out, 'Jem! how's her head?'

The man rushed back; his hand was on the carriage-window; but Blocks had thrown himself against the cushions, and his face was gravity itself.

'Did you hail again, sir?' said the veteran.

'What should I hail for, friend?' answered Blocks, once more assuming the feigned voice. 'Do you think I have nothing more to do than to talk to warrant-officers who may be nobody? My ma would disown me if I was to speak to every common man.'

The veteran turned away curling his nose and upper lip, and Blocks heard him mutter, 'D—— your ma! Some stray slip o' know-nothingness, I suppose, as is got into the sarvice, and don't know the main-tack from the captain's ——. Well, d—— my eyes! but it does nittle me to see such lubbers rigged out in uniform!' and he looked at his own. 'A precious fellow to be caught aback in a squall!—he'd sing out for his ma!—Ah! now here comes one o' your right-arnests!' as Yorick and Parker made their appearance. 'God bless yer honour!' said the veteran, whipping off his hat with the stump of his arm; 'it's worth somut to an ould tar to see a face as is logged down in his heart! Talk about his ma, indeed!—she'd be a d—— long time before she'd larn him how to rig a broomstick——'

'What's the matter, Jem—what's fallen athwart your fore-foot, old boy?' exclaimed Yorick as he recognised the veteran.

'Why, yer honour, it's no such great matter,' answered the veteran; 'it's ounly a young gentleman in the craft there with a yellow hull, as has been talking about his ma;' and Jem mouthed the word with a grimace that made the bystanders laugh.

'There must be some mistake,' said Yorick; 'there is no one in the carriage but your old shipmate, Mr. Blocks.'

'Muster Blocks?' exclaimed the seaman, doubtingly; and looking round at the laughing youth, 'Lord love you heart! why I know'd you all the time; it arn't so easy to gammon an old tar as you thinks for!'

'You've got your warrant, I see, Jem,' said Yorick, with a pleased look, for it was he himself who had been the means of procuring it for him and for his own frigate; 'and what ship are you going to join?'

'I arn't much varsed in the regard o' reading, yer honour,' answered the veteran, 'cause the skipper I sarved my time with had no manner of use for larning, so I let slip the alphabet as I'd got hould on; but they tould me it was the *Lay Surf*, and I'm thinking it's a rum name; for if any fellow could lav the surf upon Madderas beach, he'd ounly have to invent a muzzle lashing for a mosquitto, and he'd be the first man in the world.'

'Let's look at your warrant,' said Yorick; and out came a small tin case, from which the seaman drew a piece of paper backed by parchment, and presented it.

'True enough,' said Yorick, appearing to read; 'it is ship's cook of the *Lay Surf*, a ballast-lighter off Chatham Dockyard, commanded by Lieutenant Breaker. That's something to be rated cook of!—at any rate, you'll be able to make capital shingle-soup.—But where are you bound to now?'

'They tould me, yer honour,' answered the mortified tar, 'that she wur a two-and-thirty, lying at Sheernest, and so I was just going down to the wharf to take my passage in the hoy.'

'Can we find stowage inside for this young-

ster, Mr. Blocks?' inquired Yorick, as the smiling and delighted boy stood waiting.

'Yes, sir,' responded Ten-thousand, gratified to think the poor little fellow had succeeded; 'we can make him side out for a bend, or stow him down in the run.'

'No bad thought!' said Yorick. 'And here, old man,' addressing Jem, 'I am going down to Chatham; and if you can make shift on the foksle there,' pointing to the seat in front, 'I'll give you a passage. You can have an overhaul at the ballast-lighter, at all events.'

'And so I can, yer honour,' answered the veteran, looking as gloomy as a month of nights near the North Pole: 'she mayn't be so bad, arter all.'

'Maybe not, my man; and probably she is the commodore,' answered Yorick. 'There, stow your bag inside; it will do for Mr. Parker to berth on. Jump in, sir,' to the youngster. 'Away aloft, Jem, and take care of the gilguys.'

In a few minutes all was arranged, and away drove the Honourable Joseph Sydney Yorick with his two young officers and the ship's cook in company, all as merry and as playful as schoolboys going home for the holidays.

Great was the delight and joy of the gunner to see his protegé so well restored to health, and, notwithstanding the wound in his arm, capable of immediately returning to his duty: he commended his conduct relative to little Parker, who was now a midshipman of the frigate, in the place of Mr. Manning, promoted to the rank of lieutenant. In a few days they were at sea again, picking up the enemy's merchantmen; and before the winter had expired, Parker had gained sufficient prize-money to provide for all his wants, with something handsome to spare. Ten-thousand and he were again watchmates; and as each had to get forward in the service by his own exertions, so they both endeavoured to gain the best information that could possibly be obtained. Blocks was well acquainted with the theory of navigation, and he imparted the necessary instruction to his junior; indeed, on every point that he could render the youngster a service, his readiness to do so could never be called in question.

Years had passed on, and, notwithstanding the activity of Mr. Brief and others, no clue whatever had been obtained to the origin of our hero. A man had once called at the office of the solicitor and made some indirect inquiries; but as Mr. Brief was not in the way, he was requested to call again; and nothing further was ever heard of him. All seemed to be involved in impenetrable mystery, and the young midshipman began to reconcile himself more to his lot. Captain Edmonds had sailed for the East Indies with the Thirty-third, under Colonel Wellesley; but the general did not forget his young friend, as many handsome presents fully testified. Of the Wentworth family, he had been able to obtain no information: he had written to Miss Waldegrave, but received no reply; and thus passed away the winter.

The spring of 1796 came on, and *Le Cerf* was fitting at Spithead. Blocks had passed the night ashore on account of a strong gale that had set in the previous evening so as to prevent the boats from getting out, and it still blew very fresh: the tide was the last quarter flood, and the sea was breaking with violence against that part of the fortification at the entrance of the harbour then called the 'Platform,' but better known since as the 'Parade.' The port-admiral and a number of officers were standing on the ramparts, looking out at the state of the ships at Spithead; and Blocks had come to Captain Yorick, who was amongst them, for orders. Two or three boats were running in, and one of them, a six-oared cutter, was carrying a press of canvas that threatened to capsize them should the sails by any means jibe. One of the officers, the captain of a fine frigate, borrowed the glass of the signal-man, and on looking at the boat his face became dreadfully agitated: his eye was intently fixed on the cutter as she rose every now and then surging ahead upon the waves amidst the white foam of her own velocity. The speaking-trumpet was brought: the sounds of the voice reached the midshipman who was steering her, but not the words; and the intent served only to embarrass him. Captain Courtney jumped up on one of the guns, and waved his hat; but the signal did not seem to be understood: the midshipman waved his hat in return, as if glorying in the speed with which he was carried along; others waved to keep him off, and to lower his sails; but this only puzzled the youth still more, and, as if to ascertain their views, he suddenly yawed in close under the walls. All on the ramparts saw the consequences. Captain Courtney stood like one struck with sudden palsy, as the cutter tore the planks out of her bottom on the piles that were only visible at intervals, and instantly turned over. The men went down beneath their boat, and were dragged to some distance by the impetus of the tide: the midshipman was struggling in the breakers.

With the same promptitude that had actuated him at Dort, Blocks without a moment's hesitation sprang from the ramparts into the foaming surge: he succeeded in getting hold of the youth, who was unable to swim, and must have soon perished but for this timely succour. Cautioning him not to grasp his arms, our hero made him place his hands upon his shoulders, and then struck out boldly up the harbour for the Sally-port. The youth complied with every direction; but the sea was breaking too heavily against the stone walls to admit of his landing there, and he knew of the impracticability of facing the swell. The intelligence of a boat upset had flown like lightning, and hundreds occupied the holes, as our hero, nearly exhausted, was carried along by the tide: his companion was fainting, not only from alarm, but from excessive pain arising from a dreadful injury in his side. Many stood ready with ropes to throw to them; but Blocks would not venture near those walls, against which one blow would probably be death. He still struggled on; but his strength was rapidly failing, and he felt the hold of the midshipman relax. Again he rallied; but a mist came before his

eyes, a sickness stole over his heart, and a drowsy stupefying sensation crept upon his spirit: it was such as he had felt before when sinking off Calais. But again he felt himself more buoyant, his head rose higher; but he became instantly aware that the object of his solicitude had quietly slipped from his hold. It seemed to give him fresh vigour, it renewed his energy: the youth had disappeared, but he dived after and caught him by the hair; once more he rose—in another minute his feet were on the beach—seamen caught them in their arms, but sensibility had passed away. They were conveyed into the nearest tavern—the Star and Garter; Captain Courtney, Captain Yorick, and several medical men employed the means of resuscitation, and after great labour both were restored to consciousness.

Ardent was the gratitude of Captain Courtney, for the midshipman our hero had so gallantly saved was his only son, and he was motherless. Strong were the expressions of admiration from all who witnessed the daring deed, and a handsome gold medal was presented to our hero to commemorate the act. But the hurts which young Courtney had received were of so fatal a nature, that after lingering about a fortnight, his last hour drew near.

It was night—the dead of night, and all was still, except the winds as they mournfully sighed through the shrouds of the ships in the harbour, and the moaning of the waters as they washed upon the beach. And there lay that youth: the curly locks which had once been the pride of a fond mother as they hung clustering around his blooming cheeks, now fell upon temples and upon a forehead marked with the pallid hue of death; the laughing full eye which had once sparkled with animation and delight, was now glazed and sunken; the tongue whose sounds were music to a parent's ears, as it merrily carolled its innocent ditty, was now clogged and clammy, and its utterance thick and husky; the plump hand that had been often pressed with maternal affection and solicitude, now feeble and attenuated, was as white as the sheet on which it lay.

'Father,' said the dying youth to the veteran, who sat by his side sternly striving to subdue his tears,—'Father, do you forgive me all I have ever done to grieve you?'

The fine old seaman took the pale hand within his own. 'Edward,' said he,—'Edward, you have generally been a dutiful child to me; may the God of heaven as freely forgive us our sins as I forgive your errors, Edward!—Yet, oh! my boy!—my poor boy! I fear there have been times that I have been over-harsh with you for your faults. I looked upon them with too severe an eye. I may have been unkind, Edward; and now the bitter remembrance is come upon me!' And the strong man wept.

'Father,' thickly uttered the youth, feebly pressing the hand of his parent, 'do not thus afflict yourself; I can remember nothing but long years of kindness. I feel I am going, and I wish to die as a sailor ought, without a murmur of regret, except that my life's not spared longer to serve my country. It is the lesson you have taught me, father, and I am sure you would not wish me to forget it now.'

The veteran buried his face upon the pillow by the side of that of his dying child, to hide the emotions which shook him to childish weakness. 'You are right, Edward,' at length said he; 'the trial is great—God knows how great! but let us meet it as we ought. A little while longer, and you——' his voice grew tremulous for a second or two, but again resumed its firmness of tone: 'and you, the last hope of my heart, will be in the presence of your Maker. There—there! I have no fears, for He who died for man's transgressions ever liveth to make intercession for those who come unto Him pleading the mediatorial promise.'

'Are you in much pain, my young friend?' inquired the surgeon, who with Blocks was the only person in the room besides the captain and the dying youth.

'None, doctor,—none!' answered young Courtney. 'My body seems to be at rest, but heavy; my mind is quiet, and would be happy but for the thoughts of leaving my father. Tell them aboard, doctor, that I did not shrink. Give my last remembrances to all my messmates: Mr. Blocks has written down a few things that I wish each of them to have by way of keepsake. Benjamin Irons, the marine, is to have my hammock——But it is all in this paper. Will you see it done for me, doctor?'

'I will—I will, Mr. Courtney,' replied the surgeon, taking the paper: 'all your wishes shall be faithfully complied with.'

'And, father!' said the youth,—the old man started from a deep reverie,—'father! promise me never to forget Mr. Blocks. Oh, that he could be a son to you when I am gone! Promise me, father, to be his friend.'

'His friend?—yes, my child, I will be ever his friend!' responded the veteran firmly, and then sinking again into dejection. 'But I shall have no more sons; no—no!' he hastily added. 'I am alone in the world. Oh, God, support us! the punishment is heavier than I can bear.'

'You taught me to say my prayers when I was a boy, father,' feebly uttered the youth; 'but there is a dizziness over my thoughts just now, and I cannot put the words well together—though my heart is praying too. Yet, father, will you say a prayer over to me—one like those my mother used to teach me?—it will soothe me—at least, I think so. One kiss, my dear father, and then the prayer.'

The hoary seaman pressed his lips to those of his dying child. A heavenly smile beamed on those pale features; there was a faint—very faint hectic flush as the blood rallied back from the heart. One hand of the son was lightly pressed within that of the parent, the other was extended to our hero, who, with the captain and the doctor, fell upon their knees by the side of the scarcely animate body.

The captain's voice was heard—at first low and broken, but as he pleaded with his Maker, the

GREAT BEING Himself increased his strength and invigorated his mind. The aged seaman poured forth the humble but fervent petition from his heart,—the God of mercy seemed to put words into his mouth to implore for pardon and for peace, and deep and heartfelt were the asperations of his tongue as they ascended to the eternal throne. It was the parent addressing the Judge on behalf of his child—not an earthly judge of human passions and human feelings, but the Judge of quick and dead: he was not imploring a continuation of mortal existence, for nothing short of miracle could effect it; but he prayed for that everlasting life of blessedness which is guaranteed by holy writ.

The prayer ceased, but all remained kneeling—their heads were still bowed down, as if conscious of Divine interference in a Presence too sanctified to look upon. The youth moved not—spoke not—but his hands remained passive within those where he had placed them. The surgeon arose, and laying his hand above the mysterious temple of the body, lowly whispered, 'It is over—his spirit has fled!' Yes, whilst the parent was pleading his cause, the spirit had quietly passed away. Courtney still knelt by the body, his eyes fixed upon the features which once filled his soul with exquisite delight as resembling his mother's—and now, there lay his future speculative dreamings all cut down and prostrated for ever! He was the child of his old age—for Courtney was past sixty—the expected prop and stay of his declining years; but now that prop and that stay were knocked away, and the future was shrouded in the gloom of the grave. How mysterious are the vicissitudes of human life—how wonderful are the workings of Infinite Wisdom. A fortnight before, and who that had seen that proud father standing on the ramparts looking with alarm mingled with gratification at the hardihood of his boy, would now recognise him in the woe-stricken man whose head was laid beside the corpse! And who that had seen that fine animated lad, who waved his hat as if exulting in his power to rein the winds and ride the waves, would look for him in that corpse itself, which was soon to become a clod of the valley?

Blocks remained with Captain Courtney till after the funeral, and then returned to his ship; but so severely did the latter feel the loss of his son, that he made a proposal to our hero, in the presence of Captain Yorick and the gunner, to adopt Ten-thousand as his own (provided he would take the name of the deceased), and make him his heir at his death. Both Captain Yorick and the gunner saw great advantage in the proposition, and each having merely the welfare of the young man in view, pressed it seriously upon his acquiescence; but Ten-thousand for some time resisted their persuasions, as he entertained an idea that it would look like ingratitude to the kind but humble friend who had maintained him during his infancy, and who had been so mainly instrumental to the present prosperous condition in which he was placed. At length, however, he yielded to their arguments; the necessary arrangements were made, and the name of our hero was changed to Edward Courtney; he bade farewell to his benefactor and the generous Yorick; poor Parker was almost heart-broken at parting; and a few days afterwards, the ship commanded by Captain Courtney was running down Channel for the West Indies.

From his foster-parent the young midshipman received every mark of kindness suitable to the difference of their ranks; but the latter soon began to discover, that however advantageous the prospect of the future might be in regard of wealth, he had by no means made a profitable exchange with respect to happiness, and not unfrequently he wished himself back again amongst his old friends. Regrets, however, were useless, and he determined to persevere in the new course of duty upon which he had entered. This he performed, though not without encountering many unpleasantnesses amongst his new shipmates, who were envious of the consideration which Captain Courtney evinced towards him.

CHAPTER XIV.

'The sun's o'ercast with blood. Fair day, adieu!
Which is the side that I must go withal?
I am with both: each army hath a hand;
And in their rage, I having hold of both,
They whirl asunder and dismember me.'

King John.

THERE were but few families in the realm that could claim a more illustrious line of ancestors than the Wentworths and the Achesons. Allied by blood, but divided by political feuds, very little intercourse had been kept up between the branches, till at length it settled nearly into forgetfulness. The Achesons resided in a delightful place which, though designated a cottage, was nearly as large as a castle, situated on the border of a beautiful little bay at the back of the Isle of Wight; whilst the Wentworths inhabited a fine baronial hall on the coast of Devonshire, one of the most complete and superb specimens of the olden time improved upon by modern taste. Both possessed ample wealth; but at the period of my history, the representatives of each were widely different in manners and practices. The head of the Wentworth estate was married, but had no children; the father of the Achesons was also married, and the parent of two girls and a boy, his wife dying in childbirth with the latter.

The sister of Mr. Acheson had constantly resided with his family at the cottage, and seldom was there seen a female more strikingly beautiful; but there was also a repulsive pride about her, that, however much her beauty might be admired, at once repressed all tendencies to love. In so sequestered a spot, there was but little choice of society; but amongst the visitors at the cottage was a naturalised Frenchman, and his wife, an Englishwoman, persons of small income but of respectable character, named Clairfait, who occupied a pleasant and snug retreat in the neighbourhood. Such was their outward show; but there were individuals better versed in the mysteries of the contraband who

told a different tale, and, as it afterwards appeared, with no small degree of truth. Their son was a remarkably handsome young man, and perfect master of that sort of speciousness which but too frequently passes current in the world for sterling worth and integrity. Half sailor, half landsman, he had the good qualities of neither; but under the assumed frankness of the former he ingratiated himself with Miss Alicia, whilst with the shrewdness of the latter he disguised his real character and immoral propensities. He was courageous, if ferocity could be called courage; and he was daring, if constantly risking his life as a spy for the enemy could so be dignified. With the sister of Mr. Acheson he was an especial favourite and companion: they wandered together over the romantic scenery of that part of the island, and were seldom apart—for Mr. Acheson, being an extremely indolent man, never interfered; and his wife labouring under very delicate health, generally confined herself closely to the house. But there were not wanting those who spread a tale of slander greatly to Miss Alicia's prejudice; and the conduct of the young man himself tended considerably to heighten the rumours that prevailed. Alicia had but little property of her own—she was almost entirely dependent on her brother, and she was fully sensible that his pride would revolt at the idea of her union with one so much beneath her in family connection; nay, more, she was convinced that a clandestine contract would at once destroy all future expectations, and she would be thrown a destitute creature upon the world. She had no feelings of real affection for young Clairfait, and could not be blind to his numerous faults; but there seemed to be a sort of compact by which they were drawn together.

Amongst the hardy race of doubtful characters who inhabited the vicinity of the bay, was a man named George Dawes, but far better known among his associates by the title of Pig's Petitoes. He was by profession a fisherman and pilot; but, in point of fact, he was one of the most reckless and notorious smugglers that ever defrauded the revenue of its dues: and yet, desperate rogue as he was (and almost every crime had been laid to his charge), there was a degree of chivalrous honour about the man that rendered it doubtful whether there was not a devil in his nature that constantly overcame the better resolutions of his mind and heart. His word, whether for good or evil, was kept with a punctilio that seemed almost sacred, and a pledge from his lips was certain to be redeemed. To his wife he was kind and indulgent; but she bore him no children, and thus he was deprived of inducements which might have checked him in his reckless habits. The exterior of his residence, with its neat bit of garden, was characteristic of the class to which he professed to belong; but the inside displayed comforts, and even luxuries, which proved that Dawes was well supplied from some source or other.

This man, then, was the confidant, friend, and partner of young Clairfait; and thither would Alicia repair to meet with the chosen companion of her rambles. Mrs. Dawes was a shrewd, painstaking, money-loving woman, and she very early perceived the advantages of encouraging the assignations of the young couple; not only of a pecuniary nature, but also in that influential character which is so much coveted in small communities. Mr. Acheson was the lord of the manor—he was a magistrate, and Alicia swayed him just as she pleased. An appearance of obesity which, it was feared, had a tendency to dropsy, removed Alicia for three or four months to the metropolis, that she might be under the judicious care of skilful medical practitioners; and it was during her absence that Mr. Acheson became the father of a boy, and soon afterwards followed his wife to the grave. Mrs. Dawes officiated as nurse; but after the demise of the mother, a young female was procured capable of affording that nourishment to the infant of which it had been deprived by the death of its parent. Young Clairfait had not accompanied or even followed Alicia to London, but became so extremely attentive to Mr. Acheson's welfare and wishes, that he was never long absent from the cottage; and ultimately, at the proprietor's request, he took up his abode there till Alicia should return. Every week brought letters of her gradual improvement and progressive recovery; and when she once more appeared amongst them, it was with renewed health and beauty.

About this time a college companion of Mr. Acheson's was quartered at Newport; and Major Waldegrave, presuming on old acquaintance and fellowship, came with his young and thoughtless, but amiable wife, to visit the bereaved mourner. Major Waldegrave was an officer, of large property, and still more extensive expectations, from a brother, who had amassed an immense fortune in the East Indies, and declared his intention of bequeathing it to the children of the major. He was a splendid looking man, full of romantic attachment to his profession, yet ardently devoted to his wife, who, notwithstanding the frivolities of a fashionable education, cherished an enthusiastic regard for her husband. The visit was truly acceptable to Mr. Acheson, who derived pleasure in the society of his fellow-collegian; and the major, with pure benevolence of heart, endeavoured to steal his mind away from the sorrows over which it was too apt to brood.

From the first appearance of Major Waldegrave at Hartwell Cottage, Alicia conceived for him the most violent passion; and, ungovernable in her desires, so far from checking it, she gave full loose to the delirium which stole upon her soul. But this was only in secret; though it required her utmost vigilance to restrain her feelings in the presence of those from whom it was her interest to conceal what was passing in her heart. In proportion as she loved the major, so in the same ratio did she hate his wife, till, wrought upon by every demoniac principle, she resolutely determined to effect her destruction, whilst she herself employed all her blan-

dishments to captivate her husband. It was a delicate and a difficult task—one from which an ordinary mind would have shrunk with pity when it beheld the happiness of the married couple, and the extreme confiding simplicity of the young and innocent wife. But Alicia stifled all the compunctious visitings of remorse ; she cherished but one deep, strong, and overwhelming feeling, which blinded her to humanity and honour.

The colonel of the major's regiment was a man of the world ; libertine in principles, but of course an *honourable* man. He greatly admired Mrs. Waldegrave, and, but that he knew her to be unexceptionable in her conduct, as well as entertaining some dread of personal chastisement, it is not unlikely but he would have endeavoured to add another to his boasted catalogue of victims. Now, unfortunately, one of the major's greatest failings was the indulgence of jealousy : it seemed to be inherent in his nature, and he gave way to it. Yet in reality it was more the jealousy of love, than the gnawing, peace-destroying, cankerous jealousy of suspicion : though, alas ! unhappily, the cherishing of the former is but too apt to lead to the latter; and that which, if crushed in the bud, might have at once perished—by giving it a place in the warmth of the heart, has sprung into full maturity, a poisonous upas to destroy all the kindlier emotions of the human breast. Waldegrave possessed too much pride in himself, and too much confidence in his amiable wife, to delineate his colonel's character to her, or to offer those prudent admonitions which, though perhaps not absolutely necessary as warnings to a virtuous female, act nevertheless as beneficial guides to domestic happiness.

Colonel C—— was the polished man of education, and in manners one of the most perfect gentlemen of the day—gay and gallant, he had studied the many little attentions which are most gratifying to that bane to virtue, female vanity : he won confidence by assuming candour ; he professed the principles of a man of honour, he practised the deeds of a detestable villain. Mrs. Waldegrave, without knowing the danger to her fair fame, had been gratified by the deportment of the colonel ; and as he occasionally rode over to the cottage, Alicia became fully aware that the actors in her drama were preparing a tragical dénouement, whilst she had only to attend and direct the by-play. This she did most effectually ; for the colonel, struck with admiration at the beauty of Alicia, had no objection to add her to the string of his conquests : and thus, whilst she gave him cause to repeat his visits as often as duty would permit—sometimes during the absence of the major, she dexterously managed to make them appear as paid to Mrs. Waldegrave. As for Clairfait, destitute of refinement and vicious in propensity, he became a willing agent in the schemes of that master-spirit, which, like an exulting demon over the promised wreck of a tempest, was secretly rejoicing in the desolation and woe that stood in bold outline before it. Mrs. Waldegrave was near the period of confinement, but that did not relax the meshing of the subtle net which was destined to encompass her—it rather urged on the hellish plot, which none but a demon could invent, and none but a fiend could put in practice.

Alicia had frequently induced Mrs. Waldegrave to walk with her to the residence of George Dawes—sometimes to look at laces, at other times to inspect silks ; and it generally happened that on these occasions they were almost sure to be joined by the colonel, either at the house, or in going or coming. In these arrangements Petitoes was an admirable adjunct : the appearance of the ladies was announced from his flagstaff by a preconcerted signal, and the colonel, who was lurking in the neighbourhood, immediately answered it in person. Had the major been kept ignorant of these transactions, the plot could not have had its full effect : care therefore was taken that his mind should be tortured with suspicions which he nourished in secret. Had he resolutely spoken to his wife upon the subject, oh ! how much misery might have been spared ! But the confederates, knowing well with whom they had to deal, were cautious to prevent his gaining any tangible information on which to ground more than surmise ; and he, aware of his inferiority, would not by remonstrating with, or even warning his wife, give her reason to suppose that he suffered from its influences, lest it should diminish her esteem.

The confinement of Mrs. Waldegrave, which took place at the cottage, afforded Alicia additional opportunities to undermine, as she hoped, the affections of the major ; but, alas ! she was only destroying his peace. The colonel was more frequent in his visits, ostensibly to Miss Alicia, but the tortured husband was instructed to think differently. Had he spoken to Mr. Acheson, it is possible that the mischief would have been checked ; but he could not bring himself to breathe even a suspicion to another respecting the wife he almost idolised. She had given birth to a girl ; and as he fondled the babe, oh ! how often have the scalding drops rolled heavily from his eyes, and the ill repressed groans of anguish burst from his heart ! Mrs. Dawes was again the nurse, and her innuendoes and remarks were like pouring vitrol upon wounds : she would play with the infant in Waldegrave's presence, and then debate with herself which it most strongly resembled—the colonel or the major ; whilst the latter considered the observation as purely accidental, and without intention.

Several months passed away in horrible uncertainty to the major, and in diabolical scheming on the part of Alicia ; the former became petulant and sometimes harsh to his afflicted wife, and the latter, by ingratiating herself in his estimation and confidence, obtained an influence over his mind, till she had him under complete control, and he sought in her society a relief from the pangs that racked his inmost soul. Mrs. Waldegrave felt she was neglected : the colonel was more frequent in his visits, and, to

resent the conduct of the major and Alicia, he paid greater attention to the young mother, who, without a due consideration of the consequences, and reposing on her own innate sense of virtue and honour, was gratified by his demeanour and delighted in his company. She made no secret of this—she knew nothing of the evil machinations that were working against her; and that which an unbiassed observer would have construed into the strongest evidence of innocence, was by a distorted and jealous mind considered as irrefragable proof of a total abandonment of even delicacy.

In one of the conversational moments of Mr. Acheson and the major, whilst the two infants were playing in the arms of their respective nurses, a proposition was made to unite their future destiny. At first it caused a smile; but frequent recurrence to the subject familiarised it, and ultimately deeds were drawn up, by which a matrimonial arrangement was made under certain conditions, and as the major expected in the course of a short time to embark on foreign service, he placed his daughter under the guardianship of Mr. Acheson. Alicia was the leading diplomatist in the affair; and as she appeared on all occasions to act with watchfulness over her brother's interests, he readily resigned the whole management of her. Mrs. Waldegrave would have remonstrated against this; but unfortunately something of a similar spirit that actuated the major also possessed her, and she became indignantly passive, hoping that when they should remove away from the island, the dangerous association which her husband had formed with the beautiful Alicia would be terminated.

What led to the final catastrophe was not at the time known: it was rumoured, however, that the major had made a discovery which realised his worst fears. With all the impetuosity of a madman, he upbraided his wife, who warmly repelled his accusations, till, in an unguarded moment, the unfortunate and infuriated husband felled her to the earth. The lady had not many minutes before parted from the colonel at the extremity of the grounds: the major had not witnessed the parting, but became fully assured of the fact, which his wife did not for one moment attempt to deny. His rage was ungovernable,—the repressed feelings and suspicions of months burst out in one irresistible torrent, and Mrs. Waldegrave lay bleeding on the ground at the feet of the man who loved her to distraction, and whom she loved with an intensity bordering on adoration. Alarmed at his impetuosity, the major raised his fallen wife; but she was insensible: he therefore hastened to the cottage, and through the ready agency of Miss Alicia, who hurried to the spot, assistance was prompt; but Mrs. Waldegrave was nowhere to be found.

The major mounted his horse and rode after his colonel: he came up with him in a lonely road between Newport and the coast. Evening was closing in, and a dull oppressive heaviness hung upon the atmosphere. The officers rode side by side for a minute or two without speaking. The colonel saw that something had disturbed his companion in arms, and an awkwardness came over him as he conjectured it might arise from the supposed familiarity with Mrs. Waldegrave, whom he had so recently quitted.

'This is an unexpected pleasure, major,' said the senior, as he regulated the pace of his horse to suit the convenience of conversation. 'Do you go to Newport to-night?'

'No, Colonel C——,' replied the agitated and agonised man,—'No, Colonel C——; my distance is effected—my object is nearly accomplished.' He threw himself from his saddle and caught the colonel's rein. 'Dismount, sir!—dismount! I have but few minutes to spare. Colonel C——, you are a villain!'

'How, sir,—what is this?' returned the colonel, stirring up the mettle of his animal with the spur; but Waldegrave held the bridle with too strong a hand for him to escape. Letting his own steed at liberty, he drew his sword, as the colonel shouted, 'Major—Major Waldegrave, you are mad! would you assassinate me?'

'I am not mad, villain! but I am desperate!' responded Waldegrave, vehemently. 'Dismount, I say, and here defend your life!—dismount! or the wrongs of an injured husband may not leave me sufficient reason to give you even the chance of self-defence.'

'Be calm, major—be calm,' said the colonel, in a tone which, however it might be meant to soothe, did but aggravate the raging passion of his opponent. 'I solemnly assure you, I have never injured you; and as for your spotless wife—'

'Liar and coward!' exclaimed the major, as he struck the colonel in the face with the flat of his sword; and the high-mettled animal, rearing up, the colonel was in an instant on his feet, with his weapon bared, upon the defensive.

'I am not called upon to meet a madman,' said the colonel, as he shouted for help and parried the thrusts of his antagonist. No help came; and finding that his only chance consisted in coolness and caution, so as to obtain the advantage over the major, he mustered all his skill and energy. Wounds had been given on both sides, but they were slight. The colonel endeavoured to disarm his brother officer, but without avail: for though the latter was brought to a pitch of extreme excitement, yet he had often been in the field, where intrepidity and skill went hand-in-hand. He was an excellent swordsman; but still the colonel overmatched him, and the scabbard of the major getting between his legs as he drew up to parry a pass, threw him with violence to the ground, just as his sword in returning the thrust had entered his colonel's body.

For several minutes Waldegrave lay stunned and stupefied. On recovering, it was nearly dark; the sombre shades of the trees as they overhung the way nearly excluded the last glimmering remains of daylight: yet he beheld nearly close by his side the dead body of his commanding officer; whilst in the gloom stood a tall figure whose bulky form, magnified by the haze and a vivid imagination, might have well been mis-

taken for the prince of the powers of the air exulting over the horrible catastrophe. The major raised himself with difficulty—a maddening sensation came over him—superstition mingled with the feeling when the stranger slowly approached, and he heard the voice of Clairfait as he exclaimed,

'A pretty evening's work, major! you have fairly pinked him; and now flight—flight is your only resource.'

'I will not fly,' returned the major doggedly; 'I have struck the villain to the heart with more mercy than for months he has been stabbing me. Here will I abide and meet my fate.'

'Nonsense, nonsense, man!' responded Clairfait familiarly; 'this breeze will soon blow its strength out, and why should you brave it when you may be safe in port?' He whistled, and the smuggler Dawes was soon at his side. 'Here, Petitoes, the major has had a mishap: you must get the craft ready directly and run over to Guernsey with him, where he'll be safe enough.'

'Ay, ay, I see—I see,' returned the hardy Dawes; 'I will harbour him in so snug a berth, that not even a rat should find his anchorage. Come, major, it's a bad job: but it might have been worse, you know, if you had been hove down in his stead; and, arter all, what is it but tallyation?'

'Right,' said the major,—'right, it is retribution and deadly vengeance: the sword of an injured man has redressed the wrong.'

'We all on us looked out for somut of the kind,' said Dawes. 'Ay, ay, that same colonel was a gay un, and didn't much care whose manor he poached on, or where he got his cargo of pleasure so as it was but contraband.—But I say, major, will you go with us?'

'To be sure he will,' uttered Clairfait: 'none but a silly child would remain here to be taken, and know the penalty is death. There were no seconds; no one witnessed the encounter. At all events, I'd run the chance of a few days' liberty before I surrendered; I would collect my thoughts and arrange my plans: for though everybody knows the provocation you have received, yet——'

'Do as you please with me,' said the wretched man, whose faculties were almost benumbed at finding that others had a full knowledge of the shame which had been brought upon him. But, at the same time, there came also the conviction that he had just grounds for his resentment, that he had not taken summary vengeance on the destroyer of his peace from mere suspicion; and the guilt of his wife, however much it weighed him down in spirit and rendered existence hateful, still prompted him to consider his offence more in the light of a triumph than the commission of a crime.

'You are wounded, major,' said Clairfait, assisting him to rise,—'and severely too. Not a moment should be lost: I will see you safe to Petitoes, whilst he starts off to prepare the boat. We must do something to stop this bleeding.—Off with you, old boy: the night will be fine, and the galley will make the quickest passage.' The man departed, and the speaker, tendering assistance, added, 'Come, major, take my arm.'

'And leave him there?' said Waldegrave inquiringly, as he looked down upon the body of the colonel.

'Ay, surely, he'll lie quiet enough,' answered the other, with a fiendish chuckle of ill-repressed delight that thrilled fearfully upon the major's ears: 'the last thrust did for him pretty handsomely.'

'You witnessed it, then?' said the major quickly; 'you saw the whole, and can prove—'

'—Nothing, major, nothing,' responded Clairfait doggedly. 'It was no difficult matter to tell what brought him to the ground. But, come, we waste time; the body shall be seen to as soon as you arrive in safety.'

'My debt of gratitude will be great to you, Mr. Clairfait,' said Waldegrave as they moved away. 'But do you really suppose there is a prospect of getting off from the island?'

'Much will doubtless depend on your own determination and the state of your wounds,' answered Clairfait. 'If you have resolution enough to persevere, and there is no immediate danger from your hurts, you may be off to sea in less than an hour, so as to set pursuit at defiance.'

'I shall resign myself to your disposal,' said the major dejectedly: 'but is that man Dawes to be trusted?'

'What! doubt Petitoes?' exclaimed the other in a tone of banter; 'I should as soon think of doubting whether I am my mother's son. Ay, trust him cordially, and do not be a niggard of your confidence; if he says he will befriend you, he'll do it, never fear: but avoid all ambiguity,—deal with him in a straightforward manner, and you will have no cause to repent it.'

The word 'befriend' grated harshly upon Waldegrave's ear: there was a humiliating association in the term to which he had never been accustomed, and he keenly felt the degradation of such befriending; but he had no alternative—there was capture or flight, and he had fixed upon the latter. 'I will implicitly follow your directions,' said he.

Very little conversation took place during the remainder of their walk; and when they reached the residence of Dawes, Clairfait left him for a few minutes to see that no one was in the immediate neighbourhood who would be likely to recognise his companion. The major stood leaning against a tree, his heart almost bursting with anguish, when suddenly a female stood before him. At first he thought it was his wife; but the voice was that of Miss Alicia. She took his hand.

'What have you done, major?' exclaimed she; 'why are you here,—and where is Mrs. Waldegrave?'

'By the side of her dead colonel, perhaps,' replied he, with bitter emphasis. 'You have prompted me well, lady,—their guilt was clear,—thanks for your friendly counsel and directions.'

'Dead!' shrieked Alicia, retreating backwards,—'Colonel C—— dead? And you, major—you—oh, whither will you fly?' and she again took his hand.—'Great God! I did not contemplate

this: and by your hand, too! Oh, Waldegrave! Waldegrave! what will become of me?'

'He met his death in fair fight, Miss Alicia,' replied the major calmly, neither pressing nor refusing the hand which had been placed in his. 'They had just parted at the great gates,—I followed and taxed him with his baseness: our swords have performed their task. But I did not know,' he added acrimoniously, 'that the man was so estimable to you, Miss Alicia, or I might have——'

'Not know my regard?' uttered the lady reproachfully. 'Have we been, then, so frequently together—has my whole soul in its tenderness so well preserved the doubtful, that you could possibly remain ignorant? Oh, Waldegrave! you must have been sensible how fondly my heart was attached.'

'I was not aware, Miss Alicia,' returned the major in a tone of sorrowful contempt. 'I was no confidant to your secret affection. I had reason to think that another——' he checked himself. 'Lady, the colonel was a happy man.'

'His happiness was not in *my* keeping, Major Waldegrave,' responded Alicia proudly. 'The wife of his friend——'

'Spare me!—for the love of Heaven, spare me!' ejaculated the agitated man. 'I thought the colonel was your aversion; you have repeatedly declared it to me. I could not read your heart,—I could not tell that your affections were placed on him.'

'On him!' exclaimed the lady with passionate energy,—'on Colonel C——!' She laughed in scorn. 'Now, Waldegrave, you are mocking me: the wretch was my abhorrence, and his death is my gratification. He betrayed you, Waldegrave,—he drove the searing iron home, and——'

'In what way, then, am I to construe your language, Miss Alicia?' inquired the major, as the startling fact which had previously broken in upon his mind now stood fully revealed: 'to whom were your allusions made?'

'Cruel and unkind!' uttered she, in a voice of plaintive harmony. 'Have you, then, led me on to hope, to believe, and now would you urge me to despair? Oh, Waldegrave! Waldegrave! finish your evening's sacrifice by adding another victim to deception!'

'How—what is this—am I—is it me to whom you have alluded?' exclaimed the major, as torturing suspicions of he scarce knew what rushed across his heart.

Alicia mistook the tone for one of tenderness: fervently hoping that her efforts had not been in vain, she fondly cherished the conviction that he was now her own,—she pressed his hand to her lips—laid her head familiarly upon his shoulder, as she answered, 'Dear Waldegrave, can you doubt it?'

For the first moment or two, a feeling of pleasure stole upon his senses: he felt there were yet those in the world who loved him, that he was not wholly cast out from human affection and human sympathies—that there was one who in the midst of his difficulty and distress would cling to him; but it soon passed away. 'Henceforth, Miss Alicia,' said he mournfully, 'my course must be through peril and disgrace—through——'

'I will freely share them with you, Waldegrave,' exclaimed she, hastily interrupting him. 'Do you think that Alicia's regard is confined to prosperity and ease? No, no; I shall welcome danger—I shall brave disgrace, if I am with you.'

He would have replied with greater firmness; but at that moment Clairfait approached, and they proceeded to the house of Dawes. On entering the place, the light fell on Alicia's dress and showed her that it was daggled with blood. The truth flashed upon her quick conception: she looked at the major and saw him fainting, and instantly her arms were extended for his support—she pillowed his head upon her bosom, she committed many extravagances to which he was insensible. His wounds were examined: she dressed them herself, and insisted upon accompanying him in his flight; but this he peremptorily declined; and though his thoughts were greatly confused, he had yet discernment enough to be sensible of the gross impropriety of her conduct. He had never loved her—he had, in fact, scarcely indulged a sentiment of common courtesy—certainly not beyond it; but false delicacy, aided by concurrent circumstances, had produced a round of delusion of which Clairfait alone retained the key. Though abandoned in his propensities and seeming to acquiesce with perfect indifference to the plots and counterplots of Miss Alicia, he nevertheless had not been insensible to the neglect he had experienced from her: his pride and vanity had been humbled, and he had, in fact, merely acquiesced in her arrangements as they afforded him better opportunities to further his own designs. He had experienced several reverses where he had fully anticipated large profits: more than one cargo had been seized; and though he still passed as a man of good property, yet his expectations had been greatly reduced. The ample fortune of Mr. Acheson, whose income was almost entirely at the disposal of his sister, enabled Miss Alicia to have an unlimited command over adequate resources for every purpose that she required, and Clairfait was amply supplied whenever he chose to solicit; for notwithstanding former intimacy had ceased between them, he yet retained a powerful influence over her which he did not fail to employ whenever he deemed it requisite to do so.

The major's wounds were none of them serious, or such as rendered it necessary for him to delay his departure. Dawes had reported the boat ready, and Alicia had gone out to speak with Clairfait in compliance with an intimation the latter had privately given.

'Thus far,' said the agent, 'everything has progressed as well as you could have wished; the colonel is comfortably disposed of—pray what has become of the lady?'

'That is beyond my knowledge,' answered Alicia proudly; 'the place where I was directed

to, was abandoned, nor could any traces be discovered of her retreat.'

'It tells to our advantage,' said the other; 'and now, if we could find out where she is and keep her out of the way, her disappearance would be a confirmation of her guilt.'

'We must endeavour to ascertain it,' responded the lady; 'but I never imagined that affairs would be carried to such extremity. A life has been sacrificed, and so far it perhaps would have been but of little consequence, as the possessor of it was worthless; but it has hazarded the existence of one who is truly estimable.' She paused.

'The major,' returned Clairfait calmly: 'I perfectly understand you. But were you so simple as to suppose,' and he seized her arm with energy, 'that the passions of men are like the foolish petulance of women?—that words alone are to give utterance to feeling—that wrongs, whether imaginary or real, can be atoned for, by noisy altercation or learned argument? If you have hitherto thought so, go look upon yon corpse and prove the fallacy of your notions. What line have you marked out for your future course in this affair?'

Alicia had, through the indulgence of an unhallowed passion, involved herself in a labyrinth which she had not foreseen. Her aim had been to separate Waldegrave from his wife through the medium of that baneful inclination which she had early detected as strongly prevalent in his temper and disposition: what ulterior proceedings might be desirable, she left to be decided by the progress of events. It was for this purpose she had encouraged the visits of the colonel, and cultivated the pernicious weed that choked the growth of generous feelings in the major's breast. But she had never calculated the effects which were likely to take place when the officers met in decided hostility; and now, though part of her scheme was fully accomplished, she saw at once that unless she could accompany the major, her influence would be at an end, and the prize for which she had risked her soul's salvation would, in all probability, be wrested from her grasp. 'Waldegrave ought not to go alone,' said she with emphasis: 'he is bowed down by affliction and wounds.'

Clairfait readily understood the drift of her words, and he seemed fully able to meet the case. 'He is a soldier,' said he, 'and should be prepared for every privation and every inconvenience.'

'I was thinking of going over with, or, at least, following him,' said Alicia diffidently. 'We must not perpetrate a double murder.'

Clairfait laughed in seeming wantonness; but there was a bitter expression in his manner that spoke of irritated feelings. 'You have become considerate, Miss Alicia,' uttered he.

'And if I have,' responded she proudly, 'who is there that shall presume to censure my acts?'

'Not I, certainly,' answered Clairfait scornfully. 'You know me too much your devoted servant to imagine that I would interfere in your pursuits: still, I thought that the comfort of your indolent brother and the welfare of the infant heir might have a prior claim to your consideration—to say nothing of the opinion the world will form of a female who runs after a married man—and that man in the eye of the law a murderer. Go if you please; but——' and he stopped short.

'Your threat again!' exclaimed the lady haughtily, 'Oh, how do I despise myself for placing it within your power to threaten me! But, beware, Clairfait! beware!'

'Your caution would be well applied to both,' answered he, with provoking calmness; 'you seem to forget that there is such an actuating principle as self-defence. Have I not loved you, Alicia—do I not still love you dearer than my own soul?'

'You love!' uttered she, with proud disdain: 'no, no, Clairfait, you never experienced one sensation corresponding with the sacred character.' He laughed. 'Ay, you may turn what I say to ridicule; but have I not been your dupe—your victim?'

'These heroics will not forward your purpose, Miss Alicia,' answered Clairfait, 'nor will they advance the interest of your friend. I do not dictate, I merely counsel; but there are perhaps the opinion and wishes of another to be taken.'

'The major's,' said she hurriedly. 'It will not be necessary: the sentiments which you counterfeit he possesses in sterling reality. Does he resist my solicitude?'

'You may find yourself mistaken,' returned he, with perfect self-possession: 'sanguine temperaments are apt to estimate the feelings of others by their own.'

For an instant or two the insinuated doubt held dominion of her mind; but quickly banishing it, she answered, 'I am cherishing no mistake now, whatever I may have laboured under in times past.'

'Then Waldegrave is not the man I have supposed him to be,' responded Clairfait composedly, 'and I err greatly in my judgment of human nature. Put it to the test.'

'The *Polly* is ready and the lads impatient,' said Dawes, approaching them; 'we had best make a clear run of it whilst there's a clear coast. I've transmogrified the sodger into a plain blue-jacket, and I'm thinking he begins to fancy himself an honest man's child.'

'We must not delay, old friend,' returned Clairfait; and they re-entered the house. Waldegrave had indeed undergone a change in appearance: his handsome regimentals had yielded place to a rough jacket and trousers, and he stood in the foul-weather dress of an Isle of Wight pilot of 1780; but he did not regard it—his thoughts were engaged on other objects.

'Are you fully prepared, major?' inquired Clairfait; 'or is there anything we can do for you? You will find everything requisite in the boat; and, rely upon it, your interests shall not be neglected here. You may communicate with us easily through the agency of old Petitoes.'

'Ay, ay, I'll take care o' that,' responded

Dawes; 'let him once get safe over, and there'll be no fear of court-martials nor gibbets.'

Alicia had withdrawn with Mrs. Dawes into an inner room for a few minutes, and she now reappeared carefully wrapped up in a horseman's cloak. 'I am ready,' said she.

'Ready?' repeated Waldegrave, as he looked earnestly upon her. 'Surely you cannot intend —you cannot mean——'

'—To be the companion of your flight, major?' uttered she, taking up the unfinished sentence. 'Yes, that is my design! Could you suppose that I would suffer you, distressed and wounded as you are, requiring tenderness and care, to go alone?'

'Miss Alicia,' returned he firmly, 'this must not—cannot be! Fate seems to have wove a net around me that trammels my feet at every step. No: let what will be the result to me, I must have no associate in my flight.'

'Waldegrave,' said Alicia firmly, 'we have not gone thus far, for me to abandon you now. We go together.'

'Never! never!' exclaimed he, in a tone of fixed determination. 'If I have excited more than friendship in your breast, my present punishment will be doubled by the knowledge of it. Oh, let me implore you not to overwhelm me entirely! I have loved Amelia too strongly, too faithfully, too ardently, for any other person breathing to supplant her in my heart. She has fallen:—oh, God! how horrible is the conviction!—yet—oh, no! there is not that being in creation I could love again!'

Clairfait gave Alicia a look full of meaning, as the latter stood apparently paralysed by the declaration she had just heard. It was not the utterance of doubt that she had listened to,—it was not the expression of anxious solicitude for her welfare that had met her ear: it sounded like the words of the dying, full of truth and sincerity. The blow was heavy,—she could not sustain it; her arms were extended in the act of deprecation—her lips moved, but there were no words. A deep groan burst forth, and she dropped senseless on the floor.

'Now then, major, top your boom,' said Dawes; 'the young gentleman and my old missis will make all square for you in the long-run.'

'Mr. Clairfait,' said Waldegrave, as he wrung the hand of the person addressed, 'my daughter,' he stopped short—a fearful scowl passed across his features. 'It does not matter,' added he; 'I can write to Mr. Acheson from Guernsey. Farewell!'

'Adieu, major! keep up your spirits!' exclaimed Clairfait; 'every rope has an end to it, and I make no doubt we shall pull you through.'

They quitted the house—the major embarked —the wind was fresh and fair—the galley set her large lug, and throwing aside the foam, darted through the water like a dolphin in chase. Great was the distress of Alicia when, on recovering, she found that Waldegrave had departed, and the sanguine hopes she had so fervently cherished were crushed. Clairfait had left the house, but she found him on the outside with his night-glass. The receding boat, however, was no longer visible, and at Alicia's request he accompanied her towards the cottage.

'You perceive that my conjectures were correct,' said he with mildness, as if commiserating her misery; 'and now I trust, Alicia, you will no longer indulge in speculative dreams. You have duties—ay, and important duties too, to perform. Waldegrave will trouble you no more: tear, then, all remembrance of him from your heart; has he not basely deceived you?'

'Alas! no,' muttered the unhappy female; 'I fear I have been deceiving myself,—I have fallen into the pit which I dug for others. But you, Clairfait, you have seen it all, yet forbore to give me warning.'

'It was useless to warn one who scorned all advice,' returned Clairfait. 'Your own headstrong passions blinded you to reason,—you despised the voice of affection; would friendship have had a stronger claim?'

'It is folly, Clairfait, to talk of affection,' returned Alicia mournfully; 'had you indeed possessed it, this wretchedness might have been spared. It is a falsehood—a cheat—a mockery; —you know not—you never did know what real affection was.'

'And you, Alicia,—you boast of experimental knowledge,' retorted her companion with a sneer. 'You, who profess undying attachment to one man, play the coquette with another, whilst,' he added, with deep and earnest solemnity,—'whilst a sacred pledge—a holy compact exists with a third.'

'You do well to become my accuser, Clairfait,' returned she, with a voice faltering under overwhelming grief; 'but do not call the compact holy—it was accursed from the first moment, and here we have its condemnation: even that very pledge you mention is but a thorn in the side.'

'Alice—dear Alice,' said Clairfait, with softened pathos, 'I will not accuse. Have I not been your slave—your shadow—the creature of your will? My hand, my heart, my humble fortune were yours, if you would have shared my destiny. Am I then to blame? can you tax me with unfaithfulness?—But come, dearest, let us no longer vex each other's spirit: I am unchanged in all things except my broken fortune; —why not——'

'No, no, Clairfait,' uttered she hurriedly, 'I know what you would say: it cannot be; I will not give my hand to one whom I abhor.' He stopped short in his walk as a convulsive spasm shook his frame. 'Ah! the pledge, you would say,' continued she; 'true—too true: but I cannot converse on the subject now. See,' said she, pointing to the glorious planet that was rising above the hills; 'sooner shall that bright orb be quenched for ever than I become the wife of——'

'Stop, Alicia,' growled her companion, 'and do not taunt or urge me too far: I can bear—ay, I have endured much—very much; but there is a point of contumely and insult beyond which it would be hazardous to go. Let us dismiss the theme for the present.'

'Now and for ever,' resolutely responded the lady. 'I would sink to beggary without a murmur with the man I loved; but——'

'D——n! madam,' exclaimed Clairfait in irrepressible rage, 'do you think that you are talking to a senseless block—a stone—a rock—a brute destitute of human feelings and human frailties? There is a devil tugging at my heart even now, and whispering——'

'—Murder,' returned Alicia calmly; 'I know it well, but I defy you. Yet do not fear that I shall desert my duty; the obligation is a sacred one to me, though originating in hellish practices. Go, Clairfait; there is poverty and degradation before you; go, and I will supply your wants as far as my power may extend; but talk no more of marriage.'

They parted at the entrance to the grounds. He watched her till she disappeared in the gloom, and then proceeded towards the spot where he had left the body of the colonel. 'What!' muttered he to himself, 'did she imagine that I played her game merely to gratify her whims and pleasures? She must have two strings to her bow—a colonel and a major; thanks to my guardian genius, I have provided for both, and neither will again cross my hawse. The fool still thinks me faithfully attached to her; but the fact is, she is useful to my pleasures. I am bankrupt in purse—my parents would be destitute to-morrow but for her supplies; and though I take pay both sides of the water, yet they begrudge a miserable pittance for intelligence on which the fate of kingdoms may rest. I must strike out a new path to wealth and fame till such time as these estates come under my sole control, ay, and the vast possessions of the Wentworths and the Waldegraves too. By Heaven! I have too long dallied with this foolish, obstinate girl; it is time she felt my power—and she shall feel it! I am darkened by a cloud—the gloom of poverty surrounds me; but my star will once more shine resplendent. It is gold my spirit covets—unbounded wealth; and though years may pass before I can attain it, still it must—it shall be mine—ay,' and he raised his voice, 'though I should wade through seas of blood to make it so.' Here his soliloquy suddenly ceased as he beheld a dim, shadowy form standing before him in the pathway. He was a man of strong nerve; but at that moment, when unholy desires and threats were crowding from his heart, he could not look upon the appearance unappalled. At length he exclaimed, 'Now, whether you be angel or devil, I care not! quit the road, or——'

'Stop, thou man of sin,' uttered a low plaintive voice: 'thy thoughts must be of evil, for such unhallowed words to escape thy lips.'

'Cease this mummery, Jeannette,' answered the man; 'you know that it does not scare me. I do not cross your path with ill omens and gloomy warnings; why should you cross mine?'

'There has been murder done since the glory of the day departed,' said the other; 'blood has been shed—an immortal spirit has been hurried unprepared into the presence of its Judge.'

'Well, what have I to do with that?' answered Clairfait boldly. 'If men will fight or cut one another's throats, how can I help it?'

'Those who are placed in fair fight, risk their lives, and are upon a par, though not less murderers,' responded the female; 'but it is the base assassin, the man who stabs in the dark——'

'Ha-a!' shouted Clairfait, with a hasty drawing in of the breath, 'do you mean to insinuate that I—— Yet, nonsense! it is sheer folly. Let me pass, Jeannette; and go to your home and say your prayers.'

'Conscience is oftentimes the boldest accuser,' said Jeannette: 'search yours, thou man of many crimes, and bear in mind that Heaven has its eye open when all others upon earth are closed.'

'Now do you try my patience beyond measure,' answered he, angrily. 'I ever speak you civilly; your hermitage is unmolested by those who call me leader, although they fancy some pillage might be obtained. Folks call you holy; but such religious cant does not pass current with me.'

'Out upon thee, mocker!' responded the female. 'My pallet is unmolested, it is true; but its safety is owing to the superstitious fears of your misguided followers rather than your control. And what could you expect to find? My healing herbs and medicines, the produce of my labour, I dispense gratuitously; my food is scanty, and the clear stream my drink.'

'Well, well, do not cross my path, good mother, and I will send you a little brandy to mix with your water, some that has never been poisoned by the gauger's stick.—But have they removed the body?'

'Obdurate man!' exclaimed the other, mournfully, 'ask not for the dead, but say what has become of the living.'

'Well, I will, to please you, Jeannette,' responded Clairfait. 'He has just stepped over the brook yonder,' pointing to the sea.—'It is the women create all this mischief, Jeannette; they have set two brother officers fighting—one is compelled to fly, leaving the other run through with a sword.'

'I thought it was a knife,' uttered the female, as her voice came with a hissing intonation to his ears,—'a large clasp-knife.'

'It is a lie—a vile fabrication!' shouted Clairfait, with hurried emphasis. 'I—what would you say?—it was the major's sword.'

'Blood will have blood,' returned the woman, forcibly, in a hollow sepulchral tone, which, added to the darkness of the hour, struck heavily upon her companion's heart. 'Offences will come; but woe be to him by whom they come!'

'The devil's back is broad enough, Jeannette,' replied the man. 'But I must on my way to——'

'The body is gone,' uttered the woman; 'they have conveyed it to the town of Newport, and men are seeking for thee: they say thy hands are red.'

Although it was so dark that objects could scarcely be distinguished, Clairfait involuntarily looked upon his hands. The intimation that he was sought after produced an instantaneous effect. 'If the body is gone,' said he, 'I may

as well return: and as for men seeking me, they ought to know pretty well where I am to be found. Good-night, Jeannette: go and mumble over your prayers, and then dream of your sins when you was a gay and giddy girl, breaking the hearts of the young men with love, and killing the young women with envy. Say a good word for me, Jeannette.'

'Out upon thee, scoffer!' answered the woman. 'The days of youth are those of temptation, which, if yielded to, leave an old age of repentance or remorse. You are treasuring for yourself a store of iniquity that ere long must fall and crush you.' He was walking hastily away as she added, 'And see, the wicked fly even when there is no one in pursuit! My suspicions, then, I fear, are but too well founded: yet are they but suspicions.' And she quitted the spot.

CHAPTER XV.

'Blood and destruction shall be so in use
And dreadful objects so familiar,
That mothers shall but smile when they behold
Their infants quarter'd with the hands of war—
All pity choked with custom of fell deeds.'

WHO the woman Jeannette, noticed in the last chapter, really was, no one could afford the smallest information. That she had been well educated and had moved in the higher sphere of life, was well attested by competent judges who had conversed with her; but, from some cause which no persuasion or inducement could prevail upon her to reveal, she had retired from a world that she abjured to privacy and solitude. Her dwelling was a sort of half-house, half-cavern, excavated in one part of the cliff that bounded the bay. A flight of what are termed, in some places in England, shepherds'-steps, were cut out in the rock, and ascended to a shelving parapet of about twelve feet by six, and not less than from thirty to forty feet above the level of the sea. The front of her dwelling projected from the cavern frontier, and was built up with a sloping thatched roof, forming a sort of ante-room to the interior, whilst above the spot the cliff towered for several hundred feet. In age Jeannette appeared to border upon fourscore; but there were times when she manifested such strength and activity, that doubts were entertained whether the semblance of decrepitude and age were not in a great measure assumed for the purposes of concealment. Yet her life was so quiet and unobtrusive—administering to the wants of the sick and infirm both in body and in mind, imparting useful instruction to the young and offering affectionate advice to the old, that no one presumed interference or threatened molestation; whilst the hardy race of smugglers, desperate as was their calling, had too great a dread of what they deemed her witchery to thwart or injure her: indeed, on many occasions she had rendered them essential service, when hurt or wounded in the hazardous traffic in which they were engaged, by her knowledge of surgery and medicine.

No one was admitted beyond the little anteroom of her habitation. There she dispensed the bounty which Heaven had sent her, and there she received the numerous little acknowledgments of the families of the fishermen and peasantry of the neighbourhood; whilst there, too, were frequently to be found the gratuitous offerings of the smugglers in articles of luxury, such as teas, coffee, candied-sugar, sweetmeats, and numerous other things, the produce of illegal trading with the ships from India, by which they hoped to propitiate the good will and good wishes of the recluse when they entered upon any of their lawless excursions. The wealthy did not trouble her much, for she sedulously avoided all intercourse except with the poor; though Mrs. Acheson during her life-time had treated her with considerable distinction and kindness, and had in fact prepared the hermitage for her reception.

On the evening of the encounter between the two officers, scarcely had Clairfait and the major departed than Jeannette was bending over the body of the fallen colonel, and, by dint of perseverance, ascertained that life was not entirely extinct, but that under existing circumstances, if prompt assistance was not rendered, death must inevitably ensue. With a speed that evidenced thirty rather than four-score, she ran to the nearest cottage: a horseman was despatched to Newport, and the surgeon of the regiment, in a post-carriage, was expeditiously upon the spot, the body having in the mean time been removed to the residence of the peasant.

The professional gentleman stanched the wounds, but pronounced one of them decidedly mortal: it was of a peculiar kind too, having the appearance of a stab from a knife or stiletto rather than the puncture made by a sword. The colonel was not insensible, but he could not speak so as to be understood; he was fully aware that his end was approaching, and motioned that something like foul play had been practised, though by whom it was impossible to comprehend.

'Did no one witness the affray?' inquired the surgeon; 'was nothing found that could lead to detection?'

'There was nought but two swords,' responded the man, 'and two pools o' blood, wi' a couple of horses feeding at a little distance.'

'Let me see the swords,' requested the surgeon; and they were immediately shown to him. Both were recognised, and he shuddered with horror as he beheld the major's; for though Colonel C—— was esteemed as a smart officer, yet his vices rendered him disliked by honourable minds; whilst Waldegrave was beloved in every relationship as an officer and a gentleman. Carefully did the surgeon examine the point of the weapon, and firmly did he pronounce his opinion that the deathblow was not given by that instrument. The colonel tried to raise himself—he waved his hand and moved his head, apparently assenting to the declaration of the surgeon, who yet could not bring himself to believe that the major would act the part of an assassin. He warned the colonel to remain quiet, or his departure from existence would be acceler-

ated; but the latter, as if defying all results, eagerly motioned for writing materials. The cottage, however, could furnish neither pen, ink, nor paper; and the surgeon in his haste had left both book and pencil behind him. The earnest desire of the dying man was so intense, that the cottager produced his own substitute, a piece of chalk and a board. The colonel sat up, he seized the chalk with avidity, and with an unsteady hand wrote, 'Waldegrave is inn——;' but his senses reeled—the chalk escaped from his fingers, he fell back without finishing the communication, and in a few minutes was a corpse.

Prompt measures were adopted to arrest the major, and a coroner's inquest was summoned, which, after a careful investigation, returned a verdict of 'Wilful murder,' leaving it to the civil or military authority to decide as to who the murderer was. Mrs. Waldegrave remained undiscovered: Dawes returned, and reported that the major had been attacked with sudden delirium when about mid-channel, had thrown himself overboard, and, notwithstanding their efforts to save him, had sunk like a stone. Of course, the confederates kept this information to themselves. An outlawry was passed against the person of Saville Waldegrave, and his estates were placed under the management of trustees: Miss Alicia was more reconciled to the death of the major than was anticipated. The whole of the circumstances made considerable noise at the time; but fresh marvels arose, and the murder of the colonel, together with the total disappearance of Waldegrave and his wife, soon passed away as things that had been.

Alicia's aversion to Clairfait amounted to fearful, irreconcilable hatred; still, he exercised dominion not only over her, but also over the whole of her brother's household; and his irregularities, as well as his connection with the smugglers, made him detested and feared, not only by the inmates of the cottage, but likewise by every peaceable individual in the neighbourhood: in fact, there was but one whom he dreaded, and that was the recluse of the cliff;—Jeannette alone could curb his ungovernable temper, and Jeannette alone dared to set at nought his commands. At length, weary of the limited sphere in which he was moving, he occasionally passed many months away revelling in the luxurious pleasures of both London and Paris. Alicia entered no more into intrigues: she devoted herself to promoting the welfare of her brother; and her time, attention, and affection were lavished on the infant heir. It is true, she became petulant and passionate, morose and severe, and both children and servants suffered from her habitual evil temper; but she seldom went abroad, sought for no male acquaintance, lived almost in obscurity, and never visited, whatever invitations she might receive.

Charles Acheson grew, and, when at the cottage, Clairfait was his chosen associate; so that the boy drooped and mourned at his departure, and during his absence Dawes supplied his place. With such instructors, it cannot be supposed that the twig received the right inclination. Yet Mr. Acheson could not discern the bias of the child's mind; he strove to impress him with austere religious tenets, which the other laughed at: fun and mischief were preferable to the gloomy revealings of an ascetic, and, at his age, he naturally chose the former; still he did not dare to appear otherwise than rigidly serious in the presence of his father, whom, when clear from his sight, he turned into ridicule, and thus laid the ground-plan of a life of hypocrisy and deceit. Idolised and spoiled by his aunt, the unwitting cruelty of childhood went unchecked, and no one dared to contradict or restrain the favourite in whatever caprice or whim he saw fit to indulge. Tyrannical to his inferiors and insulting to his equals, it passed under the commendations of his aunt as the evidences of a fine free spirit; and the older he became, the more was he dreaded by his sisters and the young ward of his father. Clairfait had disappeared for some time, and no one knew what had become of him; his parents too had quitted the neighbourhood, and Alicia hoped that she should see him no more.

Dawes continued prosperous. He seldom went to sea, but yet he wanted for nothing; and it became a matter of conjecture amongst his old companions as to the manner in which he so readily obtained a handsome livelihood without doing anything. But he cared not for their surmises or their hints—it was enough for him that such was the fact, and he left others to draw their own conclusions. To the anchorite, however, he was invariably attentive, furnishing her with every information he could procure, and preventing the rude intrusions of strangers whom curiosity attracted to her dwelling.

At a suitable age Charles was sent to a public school: but his stubborn wilfulness soon disgusted his teachers, and punishment only rendered him worse; so that he did not remain long anywhere, his representations to his aunt being implicitly responded to. At length a tutor was provided at home,—an easy, good-natured, feast-loving man, who suffered the lad to do just what he pleased, merely exacting that a small portion of time should be devoted to the rudiments of education. The sisters had a governess to themselves,—a widow lady, who endured many mortifications for the sake of a comfortable asylum, and she strenuously endeavoured to enrich the minds of her young pupils.

From the desire infused into him by Dawes, Charles expressed his determination to go to sea, and the Naval College being open to him, he was placed there for a short time; but soon after his twelfth year a ship was provided, and he commenced his career in the service of his King. The early part of our history will show in what manner he conducted himself, and the reader will readily recognise in Dubois the Clairfait who had watched over his infancy. The communication which Clairfait made was one of an appalling character; it operated so powerfully over every faculty that it rendered him a traitor, so that he not only connived at, but assisted in the prisoner's escape, by removing the boat-keepers from the boats before he lowered him-

self over the stern, and allowed sufficient time to elapse for Clairfait to grasp at two or three oars, with which he formed a buoyant raft to place under his arms, and thus floated away without noise or obstruction.

On his return home to the cottage, Acheson was for some hours closeted with his aunt; but nothing of their conversation transpired—though it was evident from the flushed cheeks of the one, and the inflamed eyes of the other, that the interview had not been of the most pleasing character to either. To conceal her chagrin and to recover her self-possession, Miss Alicia walked out alone into the grounds: and certainly, could anything on earth have tranquillised the remorse of a guilty conscience, it was the beauty of the evening that was then coming on. The waters of the channel looked like an immense sheet of polished silver, reflecting the radiant tints of the setting sun, and though cool themselves and refreshing to gaze upon, yet imparted a glow from the reflection which warmed and gratified both sight and intellect. Not a breath stirred the leaves; the sky was unclouded and redolent with glory; the air was full of fragrance. But nothing could stifle the inward monitor in Alicia's breast, or soothe the agonies of keen remorse. The twilight fell heavier, the white sail on the bosom of the ocean was no longer visible, nearer objects began to fade away in the gloom, when suddenly she found her footsteps arrested by a man grasping her arm, and the voice of Clairfait riveted her to the spot.

'Alicia,' said he, 'once more I present myself before you; and not now as one who claims a right to command, but as a suppliant for your protection and a pensioner on your bounty.'

'My protection cannot avail you, Clairfait,' returned she, striving to conceal her alarm. 'The boy has told me everything, and the pusillanimity of which you have been guilty to serve your own purpose. Happily, he does not yet know all! But here you cannot, must not, shall not remain!'

'This may be bravely said, Alicia; but you must be well aware that it is calculated to make no impression upon me,' returned Clairfait firmly. 'I expected a different reception—I pleased myself with the anticipations of a welcome——'

'To the dross your soul loves, you *are* welcome,' responded the aunt. 'Name the amount and be gone.'

'Nay, Alicia, but your exactions are too harsh,' returned the man, with seeming deference. 'I would now, as I have often done before, yield all to satisfy your wishes.'

'Do not call the hateful past to my remembrance,' answered she impetuously: 'and, oh! how horribly does the future threaten to destroy!'

'You will not mend it by your present conduct,' retorted Clairfait. 'True, most true, there is a mine under your very feet: one movement, and I could spring it to your utter destruction!'

'But you yourself must also fall,' returned Alicia; 'and I know enough of Clairfait to be assured that personal safety with him is a matter of paramount importance.'

'I can bear your taunts,' uttered he, though with symptoms of impatience. 'You fancy that my danger is too great to hazard a disclosure. But what if I make my own safety the cost of the revelation? Think you that Mr. Wentworth or General Edmonds would not readily agree to terms?'

'You dare not do it,' exclaimed Alicia, at the same time manifesting considerable alarm: 'villain as you have been, and still are, you dare not do it!'

'By everything in heaven or in hell, I dare!' shouted Clairfait, fully alive to the advantage which his declaration had given him. 'Think you I will bend and crouch where I ought to command? A different reception might have engendered different feelings; but if I am to be braved, I will at least use my power in self-defence. That youth responded to my claim; he set my feet at liberty—he——'

'—Has told me all, Clairfait,' added the aunt, her tone and manner greatly humbled—'he has concealed nothing from me.'

'You know, then, that the rightful heir still lives—that he has friends who would assist his cause—that large rewards have been offered, and all—all within my grasp, and mine alone?' urged the man.

'I do, I do!' returned the aunt, as she became bowed down with the weight of a full knowledge of her position; 'and now what would you that I should do?'

'Come, come, Alicia, I thought you would listen to reason,' uttered he, sarcastically. 'It is true, your life may not be endangered; but what would life be worth, deprived of all that makes it sweet and pleasant?—what is mere animal motion, or even volition, when the finger of scorn, like the hand upon the dial, points to an eternal round of shame and misery? The very menials will mouth at you; ballad-singers will echo your name from one extreme of the realm to the other; and all who have known the beautiful Alicia will pronounce, "Thus falleth pride!"'

'Devil,' uttered the aunt between her compressed teeth, 'that first tempts to sin, and then upbraids his victim with the crime! Regrets are useless now: Clairfait, what are your requests?'

'Alicia,' returned he, mournfully, 'the latent affection in my heart prompted me to seek the interview. From you I require nothing: I have fathomed the depth of your regard, and know its shallowness. The time is not yet come when these rich domains—ay, and others infinitely more valuable added to them—must call *me* master. You know it, Alicia—you know it well: even at this moment the conviction is deeply stamped upon your heart, and nothing but death can erase it. You have offered me this evening an estimate of what I may expect in future, and I thank you for your honesty. Now, hear me,' and his voice was thrillingly deep—'hear me, and let memory hereafter bear truth to my pledge. Alicia, I leave you—leave you to the torture of knowing, that as sure as

yon bright orb shall continue to shine when we are in our graves—as sure as the throne of the Eternal is founded in power, so sure will I return at a fitting period to assume my authority over the heir to all this wealth: ay, Alicia, whether you will share it with me or not, these plantations, yon house, the rich estate shall be mine—yes, mine, Alicia, mine!'

The manner in which this was uttered made Alice tremble; and, knowing the full extent of Clairfait's power, she regretted her own intemperate harshness. 'I have suffered much, Clairfait,' said she, dejectedly. 'The wounds of other times are not yet healed: can you wonder, then, at my feeling pain when they are rudely touched? I did not mean all that my haste uttered; and surely you—you ought to make some allowance for irritated feelings.'

'I came to you, Alicia, but to say farewell,' returned Clairfait. 'Sixteen years have now elapsed, when in the pride and brightness of each other's hearts we sought no further light to guide our joyous path. Here, Alicia—here upon this very spot I have strained you to my breast: hundreds are the places that remembrance hallows as having been devoted to sweet, unbounded, exquisite delight. Did I complain of your desertion?—did I upbraid you when you looked upon me with a changed and chilling eye?—did I betray your interest or your welfare? No, Alicia, no: I bore it all, whilst damning tortures wrung my very soul. You thought you could make me your unconscious dupe, so that you might practise your impurities undisturbed. But hear me, Alicia: I undermined your plots. Your colonel might have been living now, for any wound that Waldegrave gave him.' Alicia faintly shrieked and sprang from his side as he wildly laughed. 'Ha! I have touched you there! But that is not all, Alicia. Waldegrave—ay, there the cut comes keener—Waldegrave fell by my directions, and his last words coupled your name with execrations. His wife yet lives, and the wheel is coming round full circle. You will wish for me when I am not to be found—you will pray for my presence when I am far distant. Adieu, Alicia! I take one devil with me, it is true—Revenge!—but I leave a more torturing one with you—and that is Conscience!'

'Clairfait! if mercy or pity ever touched your heart, do not leave me at this moment!' entreated Alicia. 'My position never appeared so dreadful to me as now. Oh! you have indeed opened my eyes to the gulf which lies yawning before me: I see that happiness is lost to me for ever!' And the proud lady wept.

'Nay, Alicia, nay, do not unman me by your tears,' responded he, more soothingly: 'remember this harshness was not of my own prompting—you have only yourself to thank; although I have told you nothing but the truth.'

'I am fully aware of it, Clairfait,' sighed she; 'nor can I any longer mystify myself with hopes of better things. The die, however, is cast, and it would be madness to retract. We must be solemnly leagued together in the same pursuit—bound by the same object; and, oh, God! I see it all, and tremble!'

'Now, Alicia, you are again returning to what you once were,' said Clairfait, 'and I can talk with you. Nearly the whole of your secret rests in my keeping, and rely upon it that for both our sakes it shall be preserved inviolate, unless you compel me to divulge it.—But some one approaches. Say that you will see me again before my departure.'

'I will, Clairfait, I will!' responded she in trembling agitation. 'Name your own time and place; or, if you do not fear detection, come boldly to the cottage.'

'The latter would not be so well,' responded Clairfait, hurriedly. 'The night will be fine, though probably dark: wait till everyone in the cottage has retired to rest; then meet me in the grotto,—that grotto, Alicia, where we have passed so many delicious hours together.—Hark! you are called; and 'tis his voice, too. Speak!—will you come?'

'You shall find me there, Clairfait,' answered she; 'make haste,—do not linger now!' And he plunged into the thick of the shrubbery, leaped the boundary wall, and proceeded on his way to the residence of Dawes.

The individual who came in search of the aunt was Charles Acheson. 'He has but this moment quitted me,' said she as the youth advanced. 'yes, his taunts and insults have entered into my very soul, and I have no one to avenge my cause.'

'You do me injustice, then,' answered Acheson proudly. 'Horrible as is the relation you have given me, still I will not see you injured. Where is the wretch?—But stop: it would be safer to have arms. I will fetch my pistols——'

A demoniac laugh from Alicia followed this announcement; it rang wildly on the stillness of the twilight hour, and echoed again and again. She grew more calm: 'Charles,' said she, 'would you dare redress my wrongs?—would you indeed lock up the secret of your birth for ever?—would you put your title to these estates upon a sure and stable foundation? Have you the daring, the courage, for such a deed?'

'Such a question is insulting to my character as an officer,' returned Acheson. 'What is there that I dare not do? Point out the means, and you will find me all compliance. That which a woman can plan, I do not lack courage to perform.'

'Enough, enough,' said she; 'have your arms prepared, then. Take more than one brace of pistols, for in such a cause I would spring a trigger. Be ready to accompany me when all is quiet in the house; but let it be done secretly, so as not to excite suspicion. Do you understand me?'

'I do,' returned Acheson with firmness, 'and resign myself entirely to your disposal. Say no more to me on the subject now; I will be in readiness when you call.'

They returned to the house; and Acheson not only loaded his pistols, but also a small unerring rifle that had been presented to him by his uncle

Wentworth; whilst Alicia retired to her room, dismissed the servants, and anxiously waited till everything around was hushed to silence. Clairfait in the mean time had met with Dawes, and received a hearty greeting from his old associate.

'And how has it been with you?' inquired Petitoes: 'rough like the outside of an oyster's jacket, I suppose. Why, we all thought you were dead!—and, let me tell you, there are those who would have rejoiced at it.'

'The tone is changed there, my lad,' answered Clairfait; 'I have brought the bonny lass to her bearings: we parted but just now, and she requested me to ask you for all the cash you have in the house, as she has run short, and I must be off to-night. We shall have better times before long, old boy: at present I'm in the thick of a fog; but let me have the cash and the galley—she'll make everything square.'

'To be sure, to be sure,' answered Dawes, going to a bureau-desk in his bedroom. 'Guineas are scarce now—worth five-and-twenty shillings apiece: I have been collecting 'em, for they fetch their price over the water, and pay well for the venture. Will a couple of hundred be enough? I know she'll answer it at full demand.'

'Add another fifty, my lad,' responded Clairfait, 'and give me paper that I may sign you a receipt for three hundred. Tush! it is nothing, boy, to what we will do by-and-by. I am going up to bid her farewell before starting; have the galley at a grapplin' off the Mouse-hole Cove, and I will be alongside of you in less than an hour.' They walked out together. 'Is anything stirring in the neighbourhood?'

'Nothing, nothing, man,' answered his companion. 'The galley shall be ready at the place you name; but do not detain her long, as these revenue harpies have rigged out a watch-house at the point, and keep a look-out as sharp as a knife. It's lucky too for you, the galley was going across to-night: but Gingerbread Jim got a bit of a jam in a doorway at Newport, that he hasn't recovered from yet. We shall get him out, though, afore long.'

'In limbo, eh!' laughed the other; 'that is jamming work with a witness. Well, I'll stand helmsman in his stead; I've not forgotten it, old boy. Is there anything on the coast?'

'No; the cutters are all pleasuring with the commissioners and their ladies,' responded Dawes; 'you'll go over safe enough, and try your hand at a cargo for us when you're at t'other side; silks, and 'bacca, and lace, sell well just now.'

'I will, my old friend,' returned Clairfait; 'you shall have the best the markets can produce, and that too at profitable prices. Hand over the cash.' It was given him in two canvas bags. 'Here's the paper; and now bear a hand—I shall not be long away.'

Clairfait took his way to the cottage-grounds; but before he entered them, a female stood in his way: 'Stop, man of sin,' said the voice of the recluse, 'nor hurry on to destruction.'

'Ah, Jeannette!' said the reckless man, 'tis good to meet with such an old acquaintance: I thought you were in heaven before this!'

'I wait my time,' answered she, mournfully; 'but you—proceed to your appointment, and your hours are numbered.'

'What! more witchcraft, Jeannette?' said he, laughing, though astonishment and alarm were the predominant feelings of his breast. 'Why, how came you to know anything of an appointment?'

'That is unnecessary to explain,' returned she. 'I tell you—warn you of its consequences—that a fellow-creature, and one so loaded with crime, may not be thrown into the presence of his Maker with all his guilt upon his head. Return, thou man of sin, and repent.'

'Ho, ho!' ejaculated Clairfait, 'sits the wind in that quarter, eh? Treachery!' and he gnashed his teeth. 'But they shall find that I can circumvent them. Jeannette, I thank you.'

'Nay, thank me not, vile worm,' answered she proudly; 'for if the officers of justice were near at hand, too surely would I cause you to be tried for your life. Repentance might ensue; and there is mercy for the vilest criminal if he will but seek it.'

'At all events, I am grateful for your caution, Jeannette, and will not forget it,' uttered Clairfait as he moved away. 'I'm off, old girl; good-bye!' and he struck into another path, muttering to himself, 'That woman is a fiend—a devil, to lure men on to death! But, after all it may be some scheme of Jeannette's, who probably overheard our appointment, as she is always prying into other folk's affairs. I'll put it to the test!' He turned short round, made a run and a leap, and he stood within the grounds close to the place of assignation.

All was perfectly still—not a leaf stirred—lights were still moving in the cottage, when Alicia's favourite pony trotted up to him without fear, and rubbed its head against his shoulder. With the quickness of thought, Clairfait passed his handkerchief round the creature's neck, and pushing back the door of the summer-house, led the animal in and tethered him to the table, on which he piled a quantity of grass to keep him quiet. Having done this, he retired to a laurel thicket near the cottage, where he crouched down upon the watch.

One by one the lights were extinguished, and every sound gradually died away, till the stillness became perfectly profound, and Clairfait thought he could hear the very beating of his pulse. Footsteps approached; and two persons drew so near to him, that he could have touched them both with his hand. A feeling of cautious instinct seemed to make them aware that they were close to one of their own species; they stopped for several seconds to listen. Clairfait did not draw a breath; and they again moved on. 'Jeannette was right,' thought he; 'that youth is armed not for defence, but to raise his hand against—' His attention was quickened, and he stole from bush to bush till he saw them stop so as to command the entrance to the grotto. The pony had by some means released

his head and was coming out, when the whisper of Alicia met the watcher's ear. 'It is he, Charles—keep steady and make sure of your aim.' The youth raised the rifle to his shoulder. 'Quick, quick, Charles!' said Alicia; 'he will be upon us else!—redress the wrongs of your—' A sharp report prevented his hearing more: the unfortunate little animal gave a plunge and a moan—the ball had struck him in the head, and he fell heavily to the ground.

'It is done,' said Acheson, 'it is done, and you are revenged!' He trailed his rifle and pushed into the plantation so as to gain the rear of the building, leaving his aunt alone.

'The villain is no more, then!' uttered Alicia; 'and now I may rest in peace.' A wild laugh was heard at her side, and turning round, Clairfait stood revealed before her.

'Infernal wretch!' ejaculated he, 'what do you deserve? Would you make the boy a *parricide*—set him to murder his own father? Wretch! fiend! devil!' and he wrested a pistol from her hand as she was about to raise it.

Alicia was stunned; she had no power of utterance left, and she fell to the earth in strong fits. The servants and Mr. Acheson were alarmed by the firing and her shrieks; lights were moving to and fro. Clairfait bounded quickly away, leaped the wall, and Jeannette barred his passage: 'You are safe, then,' said she; 'but who is it that is injured?'

In as few words as possible, he narrated what had taken place; and, in his anger and agony, the secret of the young man's parentage escaped him. But it was time for him to fly; and running with all his speed to the cove, the galley received him, shoved out, and the next morning he was safe in Cherbourg. The request of Dawes was duly attended to, and Clairfait hastened on to Paris, then the scene of debauchery and bloodshed—where the neighbour of to-day became the executioner of his friend on the morrow, and where to look idly on was to perish. The misnomered Committee of Public Safety had subdued the mutilated remains of the National Convention and, with Robespierre at the head, had established its own bloody reign, to be handed down with execrations to posterity as '*the Terror*.'

The day of his arrival was one that will ever disgrace the annals of France—it was the 16th of October; and as he proceeded through the streets and drew near to the Tuileries, shouts and yells rose upon the air: it seemed as if the Furies had broken loose and were venting their imprecations in shrieks of rage, or as if a convocation of demons from the bottomless pit had assembled to exult over some fresh victim hurried to perdition. He knew that executions had become so common in Paris that they produced but little excitement amongst the populace, and he imagined that some fresh revolution had broken out, or the struggle of one party had achieved a victory by the murders perpetrated on their opponents. It was indeed a pitiable spectacle. A body of the National Guards took the lead, and cleared the way amongst the *sans-culottes* and the lower orders of women who almost blocked up every avenue, raising the cries which he had heard. Next came a common wine-cooper's cart, in which stood a female with her hands tied behind her, her face calm and undismayed; and there was at times even a look of pity on her countenance as some infuriated wretch raised her voice louder than the rest with imprecations and insults, or offered disgustingly offensive injury to the condemned. She looked for a moment or two towards the Tuileries; and the circumstance being observed by the mob, they again rent the air with infuriated yells. Her eyes for an instant seemed to quail—her lips quivered—an emotion of deep distress shook her frame—a gloom of agonising sorrow passed across her features; but, collecting her wasting energies, she struggled against the impassioned feelings that were overwhelming her fortitude, and she was again firm.

Clairfait followed the procession, but he could not get near the scaffold; though at a distance he was enabled to distinguish the unfortunate female, as with an unshaken step she ascended the place of execution, and her white neck was laid bare. Then arose fresh shouts and execrations, united with obscene language and disgusting practices, that even savages might have supposed the Divine Being had given up the populace to cruel flintiness of heart. At length the victim was prostrated—the axe of the guillotine fell, and Marie Antoinette—for it was the Queen—changed a corruptible diadem that had pierced her brow with thorns, for a bright and glorious crown of happiness and immortality in Heaven.

Clairfait saw his advantage—he was dressed much superior to the general run of the Parisians; but this would have been against him, had it not been for his commanding figure and bold, unflinching, yet handsome countenance, that rendered him conspicuous above the rest; and the mob rejoiced at witnessing one whom they considered as belonging to the higher classes joining in their depravity. Still, at first, there were murmurs of dislike and hostility; but Clairfait snatched the moment when thousands of eyes were directed towards him, and throwing away his hat high in the air, he tore the symbol of revolution from the head of a bystander, and placed it on his own, as with loud, sonorous, but musical voice, he shouted 'A bas les Aristocrats!—Vive la Nation!'

All beheld the act, and treated it with thunders of applause: his costume was English, his appearance English, and they viewed it as the acknowledgment by a foreigner of the triumph of their infernal principles. Jumping on a pedestal, he briefly addressed them in terms suited to the ears of such sanguinary monsters, inciting them to renewed acts of bloodshed and butchery; he pointed to the statue of Liberty, which, with singular inconsistency, was erected as the presiding genius over the place of execution, and invoked the slaves to their own ferocious passions to massacre and destroy in the sacred name of freedom. Nor were other victims wanting; for when infuriated rage seeks to glut its thirst for

human gore, there is but feeble discrimination between friend or foe—the tiger heeds not whether his prey is one of his own, or belonging to another species. The man who had lost his cap reclaimed it; but this, amongst levellers, was considered as presumption: he demanded, and struggled for it—was laughed at by his associates, till, rendered desperate by resistance, he drew his knife, and would have stabbed; in less than five minutes the unhappy wretch was writhing in the convulsive pangs of death as his body hung suspended from the branch of a tree in the garden of the Tuileries.

From that moment Clairfait became the leader of a revolutionary mob; and his atrocities marked him out as a fit person for such a damnable office. When the Girondists, through their temerity in one instance, and their pusillanimity in another, were led to the scaffold, Clairfait's fiends hunted them out like blood-hounds true to the scent, and gave them up to destruction: he headed the rabble when the heroic wife of Roland fell beneath the gory axe; and he was mainly instrumental in the indignities and cruelties practised on the aged Bailly, who had been almost idolised as mayor of Paris. His physical influence over the mob began to excite alarm in the breasts of those who wished to reign paramount, and, to get rid of him, he was presented with the commission of a lieutenant in the Army of the North, and was sent to assist Couthon and Collet d'Herbois in their work of hellish infamy at Lyons. Here he was found a fit instrument to accelerate destruction; he revelled in human carnage—he indulged to very excess in debauchery and wickedness. It was about this time he became attached to Laison as a partisan; and the reader will call to remembrance the recognition of his features in the house of the burgomaster at Dort, and its results, as well as the subsequent transaction when he was town-major of Rotterdam.

But we must now return to the cottage on the night of Clairfait's departure, where the alarm which had been given excited such general consternation that no one could be found hardy enough to venture out alone; and it was not till the domestics were armed, that young Acheson, issuing from his bedroom apparently as if he had only that moment been disturbed, led them to the garden: but Miss Alicia, who had soon recovered from the fit, had found means to gain her chamber unobserved, so that nothing was discovered but the unfortunate pony, who had made his last kick. The whole affair was attributed to the mauraders on the coast. Mr. Acheson gave strict injunctions not to allow a stranger near the grounds; but never using any personal inspection to ascertain whether his orders were obeyed, they were thought no more of, and his son soon after joining a ship of the line, things resumed pretty much their old and accustomed track.

It was about this time that Lieutenant Edmonds paid them a short visit at the cottage, previous to embarking at Portsmouth with his regiment to join the forces under the Duke of York in Holland. His cousin Amelia was just at the age when the heart receives its most delightful and never-to-be-forgotton impressions. In the days of his boyhood, she had been his pretty infantile playmate: as he approached nearer to manhood they met but seldom, but each meeting was a renewal of innocent enjoyment and pleasure. Three years had elapsed since their last interview, and now Amelia appeared before the young officer in the full perfection of youthful beauty, yet still retaining that playful fondness which had in former times rendered them almost inseparable companions. The mere likings of childhood, however, had become even more matured than her person; she had fondly treasured the memorials of her cousin in her inmost heart, and now, when she beheld him in manly vigour, arrayed in his splendid dress as a defender of his country's honour, her feelings ripened into the fulness of strong affection. Still, Edmonds did not respond to the sentiments of the beautiful girl; nor, indeed, was he aware of the extent to which she cherished the passion. He behaved to her with his usual kindness: they rambled together amongst the picturesque scenery of that part of the island; they rode to other places in search of views to please the fancy; but the spot to which they were chiefly attached was the natural terrace in front of the anchorite's cave—there they sat for hours in sweet converse, or listening to the counsel of the recluse, who was as great a favourite with the young ladies as she was the aversion of their aunt.

After the departure of Edmonds, his cousin Amelia (sometimes attended by her sister and Miss Waldegrave, but more frequently alone) would occupy the seat where they had sat side by side heedless of the swift flight of the day; but now the very minutes hung heavily and dull, and the recluse became aware of that deep, strong, deathless passion which threatened to destroy the budding happiness of the young female. She would have endeavoured to check the feeling had it been only in its infancy; but it had grown with her growth, and strengthened with her years, till it had become bound up as a part and parcel of her very existence, and therefore all that the recluse could do was to watch over and guide its operations.

Winter brought with it its tempestuous gales and chilling blasts: the shattered ships were seen driving before the raging winds and foaming seas, vainly trying for a friendly port; the adventurous pilot and the still more daring smuggler were now exercised in the full employment of their occupation, and boldly launched their diminutive vessels, the former to rescue the giants of the deep from their threatened fate, the latter to run their contraband cargoes without fear of the revenue. Mr. Acheson seldom stirred abroad—he shrunk from the cold—even his meals were taken in his own apartments, and the young ladies might just as well have been orphans for any society they enjoyed with their parent, whose taciturn and secluded habits had been repulsive to the extension of friendly visits from the gentry of the island. Thus, but

for the amusements and indulgences which wealth could procure, and which certainly were lavishly provided, monotony, if it did not produce contentment, at least secured a calm tranquillity from the noise, the turmoil, the envy, or the malice of the world. Books, music, even newspapers, were in abundance, and anxiously did Amelia peruse the columns of the latter under the hope of gaining some intelligence of her cousin Edmonds, though trembling alarm would at times hold its sway as she feared to see his name amongst either the killed or the wounded.

It was a night of storm, and darkness hung its pall-like canopy over the ocean; the gale howled fiercely—the sea dashed and broke, groaning and roaring as if with the extremity of its own agony. Nothing but blackness met the most ardent gaze, except when some mountain-wave, crested with sparkling foam like the white plumage on the warrior's casque, dashed vengefully upon the pointed buckler of the rocky shore that opposed a barrier to its wrathful mood; then would the breakers send forth their myriads of scintillations, as if the whole order of nature had become reversed, and the ocean below was spreading abroad the bright orbs that were no longer visible in the heavens above.

But, see! there is a flash; and now a booming hollow roar is heard, carrying ont the delusion still further. The waters are sending forth the red lightning, accompanied by the hoarse voice which has been so aptly compared to a 'bloody trumpet.' Again it pierces the dense gloom, and again the thunder bellows. Ah! no, it is not the artillery of elemental warfare, but the signal-guns of some hapless vessel in distress, and the opening graves are yawning for their victims. But no traces beyond the flash and the report of the cannon can be seen of the fated craft from the shore. Still, that is enough to draw the bold seamen to the beach, some under the hope of rendering assistance to the unfortunate, but many from the still stronger desire of profiting by plunder from the wreck. Torches are blazing—a fire is kindled in one of the recesses of the cliff; the red hue streams through the dense gloom, imparting a supernatural appearance to the groups that are standing near or moving to and fro; and, oh! how many anxious hearts are wishing they were near its cheering blaze, as they gaze at it from the doomed ship! No boat can venture through the incessant and furious rolling of the surf—no assistance can be extended to those who would willingly render it. Even the intrepid Dawes stands cowering, with his hands arched above his eyes, straining his sight to catch a glimpse of the condition of that once proud fabric which now lies writhing and groaning on the rocks, like some poor condemned wretch suffering the horrible infliction of the rack. And there, too, amidst the daring band, who look upon her with respectful awe, appears the anchorite, to encourage them in their exertions, to share their perils, and to succour those who may be fortunate enough to reach the shore.

'Is there no hope for the poor sufferers?' inquired she of Dawes, whom she had led into the interior of the cave away from the roaring blast; 'is it not possible to afford them aid?'

'No boat could live to head such a surf,' answered Dawes. 'Was it in any way an act of possibility, Jeannette, you wouldn't see me stand idly here ashore whilst there was a chance of getting a good salvage afloat. I'd defy the devil himself to keep the boat eend-on in such overtopping breakers as them there!'

'They are on the rocks too,' said Jeannette, 'if I may judge the spot by the flashes from the guns. In such a night as this the ship must go to pieces; and how many immortal souls may be hurried unprepared into the presence of the great Judge of quick and dead!'

'Why, ay, mother, it will be sharp work with them,' responded the smuggler. 'There's no running a bit of contraband into t'other world, I take it; the papers must be all as correct as a reg'lar manifest to pass the Dieu-aniers aloft.'

'Mix not thus things sacred and profane together,' exclaimed the recluse. 'Will not the voice of the Almighty tame your hardened nature, and lead you to think of your past misdeeds?'

'Come, come, Jeannette, you're always a-pelting a poor fellow with his sins,' returned Dawes, impatiently. 'And as for a gale o' wind being the voice of the A'mighty, why, I'm thinking, if it is so, we've had many an hour's chat together afore to-night. But I haven't got time to talk about such things now. I know you're a kind-hearted soul, Jeannette—one as wishes to do the right thing by everybody; but it's precious hard to be rated no better than a rogue every time you fall athwart me.'

'I mean you no ill, Dawes, but rather good,' responded the recluse more soothingly. 'But hark how those melancholy signals reverberate against the cliff; and yet we have no power to save.'

Gun after gun resounded, but still nothing could be seen of the vessel from whence the reports came, till a partial clearing of the sky to seaward showed them a black mass over which the waves were breaking fiercely, and the firing ceased altogether. Broken spars, with rigging and rent sails attached to them, came drifting along the shores of the bay, and were speedily hauled up by the hardy seamen. Next came larger pieces of wreck, shattered and riven timbers, deck planks and beams, but too plainly announcing the destruction of all who had been on board that fated bark.

The officers of the revenue, well mounted, were on the beach superintending the operations; and the persons engaged in the labour contented themselves with hauling things on shore without resorting to plunder: but as the rising moon, though concealed by clouds, shed more light upon the scene, bales and casks, cases and trunks, came floating into the bay, and the wreckers then began to manifest their determined character. The revenue officers were few in number, but well armed: their opponents (for such they

were shortly to become) were numerous, and though they appeared to be without weapons, yet there was scarcely one who had not a pistol or some other instrument either for offence or defence secreted about his person and ready for instant use. Some of the casks contained spirits, amongst which was that maddening stuff arrack; and one of these latter was speedily broached, and the pernicious liquor greedily swallowed. The effects very soon began to be manifest by intoxication, that inflamed and brutalised without deadening the faculties. The officers endeavoured to put a stop to the evil by 'seizing' the casks in the magic of his Majesty's name, trusting that legal authority would be respected; but the wreckers, though at first apparently obedient and yielding, yet were soon overpowered by intemperance and the false thirst that it creates, and resolutely attacked the casks, setting the officers at utter defiance. Threats were bandied to and fro—blows were exchanged, but numerical strength prevailed.

'There will be some blood-letting here, Jeannette,' said Dawes to the recluse; 'them officers will provoke retaliation,—and what's the use o' their being so stingy? Why not let the fellows drink their fill?—they can't take much, and it will save the cases and trunks from being broke open. But "wilful men must have their way," as the saying is, and presently the dragoons will be down; for I saw one of the officers ride off, no doubt to fetch 'em. We shall have some hot work of it before it's all over.'

'Do you think every soul has perished that was on board the ship?' inquired the recluse. 'Is there not the slightest hope that one may have been saved?'

'It's hard for me to say anything about their souls,' returned Dawes, 'seeing as I had no charge of their consciences; but as for their bodies, you may take my word for it that they are as dead as King Solomon—not a creature is saved.'

'May the God of mercy receive them to his heavenly rest!' solemnly uttered the recluse. 'For them, then, nothing can be done. And here—here are the living, with the awful warning before their eyes, plunging into excess and outraging the forbearance of the Deity! I fear it will be useless for me to remonstrate with them; they have given themselves up to vile debauchery and excess—they are overcome by the temptation of the Evil Spirit.'

'Why ay, Jeannette, that vile arrack is evil spirit, you may well say,' exclaimed Dawes; 'it is the very devil sure-ly for burning a fellow's throat. But perhaps a word or two from you might keep 'em in sumut like order.'

'It is the path of duty,' uttered the recluse enthusiastically, 'and therefore I will pursue it—I will call upon them in the name of the Most High to desist!'

'Ah, do, Jeannette, try and persuade 'em to knock off resisting the officers,' urged Dawes. 'They may pick up many an odd article upon the sly and bury it out of the way; but if they gets to fighting, every house will be sarched, and we shall have a mark set upon the Mousehole Cove for the next six months, so that there'll be no doing a bit o' business for love nor money.'

'Oh, what is human nature!' thought Jeannette; 'how insensate and depraved! Even this man would think but little of the sacrifice of his fellow-creatures, as long as it did not threaten to embarrass his illegal traffic. But I must hasten to warn; though I fear my admonitions will be of no avail.'

Dawes had contemplated a rich harvest of plunder, and the smugglers almost to a man were perfectly sober, awaiting the commands of their leader Petitoes; but most of the fishermen and agricultural labourers were frantically drunk,—nor were their wives far behind them in mad intoxication, whilst they greatly exceeded their husbands in violent demonstrations. Cases and trunks were broken open—bales were cut, and the most valuable of their contents destroyed or carried off. The officers rode in amongst the groups; but though they succeeded for the moment in dispersing them, they almost immediately rallied again over their prey, which strewed every part of the shore, and the work of plunder was persevered in. Hitherto fire-arms had not been used, the flat of the sword and the rush of the horses having the effect of forcing a retreat; but the frequency and harmlessness of these assaults rendered them of less alarm and influence to the parties attacked, and the numbers of the latter greatly increasing, pistols were produced, at first to overawe, but ultimately for a more deadly purpose. The fishermen, uncontrolled by the threatened danger,—indeed, from being bereft of reason, almost unconscious of its presence,—became more furious and wild; and it was at this moment, when the officers on the one hand and the wreckers on the other hand were preparing to fire, that the recluse ran in amongst the latter and endeavoured—uselessly endeavoured—to restrain them.

'Rash, misguided men, forbear!' exclaimed she, with the utmost pitch of her voice. 'Would you shed each other's blood? would you commit murder? Put up your weapons, and take not that life which you cannot give.' But her words were wafted away on the rushing wings of the gale—they were scarcely heard, and, as a matter of consequence, were unheeded: and had it been otherwise, it is more than probable that the ear of the drunkard would have prompted the tongue of the scoffer. 'Oh!' thought she, as she viewed the unhappy wretches wallowing in brutal intoxication,—'how horrible is this!—man, created in the image of his Maker, defiling the living temple of the immortal soul, and degrading himself below the beasts that perish, whilst the Deity himself is proclaiming aloud his majesty and might, and the never-dying spirits of our fellow-creatures have been hurried, perhaps without preparation, from time into eternity!'

'To the Cove!—to the Cove!' shouted Dawes, who, having been for several minutes in communication with the officers, now hastened amongst those who might be considered his more immediate followers. 'Pass the word, my lads,

"To the Cove!" and bear a hand all of you after me.' He instantly led the way to the appointed spot, and was soon surrounded by a daring and resolute band, prompt to execute any and every command that their chief would give. The bold smuggler had prudently calculated the probable results of the hostile demonstrations: he was well aware that the dragoons would be no respecters of persons –that all hopes of obtaining booty would be immediately stopped on their arrival, and therefore his ready genius devised a scheme by which he trusted to be enabled to prevent a collision that would render the place too notorious, as well also to profit by the cupidity of the wreckers. Under the lea of a rock whose jagged pinnacles towered several feet above their heads assembled the hardy group, in strength of frame and symmetry of form some of the finest specimens of the children of the storm.

'Where's Gingerbread Jem?' shouted Dawes; and the response announcing his presence was instantly given. 'Attend, lads, and let us have no mistake. The wreckers are well loaded with plunder of all kinds; and if they get nabbed by the dragoons, I need not tell you there'll be no chance for honest men to come in for a share, seeing as, 'twixt the grabs and the philistines, they'll man-handle all they can lay hould on for their precious selves.—Gingerbread Jem, Cockleshell Jack, Cheeks the marine, Coldtoast, Barleybroth, General Elliott, Fardentoss, and Buttonhole Bob, get your divisions together, and then detach them in parties of twos and threes to carry off them drunken swabs by main force if they won't go peaceably. Remember, lads, it's all for the good of the sarvice, for, as subjects of his Majesty, we gets our living by free trade; so I say, "Long life to it!" anyhow. Now, as the wreckers arn't come honestly by what they've got, and it's no harm robbing a thief, as soon as you get's well clear of the coast, why just lighten 'em of their cargoes, and, honour bright! bring all you can scrape together to Toad-in-the-hole, where Sugarplum and Skyrocket will be ready to receive it. So, my lads, you see, the wreckers will get the credit of thieving, and we shall enjoy the plunder; and d—— the word dare they snitch about it, for fear of their own breath getting jammed in the windpipe!—I'll do the officers brown, never fear: so now bear a hand—every man to his duty, and don't forget what you owes to your country by taking care of yourselves.'

The orders were readily comprehended, and promptly obeyed. The wreckers, encumbered with their spoils and overpowered by intemperance, were easily captured by the smugglers, who carried them off into the fields, where they punctually complied with their instructions. The revenue officers remained utterly neuter for some time, preferring to leave the whole management of the affair in the hands of the intrepid Dawes, who secretly encouraged the marauders to load themselves with whatever of value they could pick up, and then consigned them over to his men. But a strong body of the more sober amongst the plunderers, and who had reaped a rich harvest, determined to resist the encroachments on what they considered their privileges, if not their just rights, and a desperate conflict took place, in which pistols and bayonets and other weapons were freely used. Some fell to rise no more, others were dangerously wounded; and as the numbers increased on both sides, the most horrible slaughter was anticipated, when the recluse, her white dress and long hair streaming in the gale, fearlessly hurried over the beach to the scene of contention; and as she appeared between the parties, the flames of the torches throwing an unnatural glare upon her figure, the combatants experienced a momentary check from the influences of superstitious awe: but it was only momentary—the fiercer passions again raged—the wreckers and the smugglers once more closed, and, unhappily, the generous and noble-minded Jeannette was at the same moment stabbed with a bayonet and pierced by a pistol-ball. Dawes saw the act, which was perfectly unintentional on the part of the stabber as far as the recluse was concerned, and he ran towards her just in time to prevent her falling to the ground. Without an instant's delay, Petitoes ordered four of the smugglers to convey the unfortunate female to her habitation; and he sent to Mr. Acheson to inform him of the event which had occurred, well knowing that, though proper assistance might be obtained for Jeannette, there was but little expectation of the magistrate himself coming forth on such a night as that was.

Daybreak began to appear—the dragoons arrived and prevented further demolition. Mr. Acheson made an attempt to face the gale, but shrunk from its piercing keenness with all the terrified forebodings of hypochondriacism; but the young ladies, escorted by domestics, were early at the recess in the cliff, carrying with them whatever was deemed requisite to administer to the wants of poor Jeannette, whom they found in a state of insensibility. But she was not unattended: to their surprise, a venerable and aged man, whose snowy beard fell down upon his breast, and whose silvery locks bespoke many years of pilgrimage, was bending over the apparently dying recluse. He was habited in a loose flowing robe of grey serge, belted round the loins with sackcloth; he wore the ancient sandals of the East; and at his back was a small harp, reminding the spectator of the descriptions of the hoary harpers of former days—though many such have been within these few years, and probably may still be seen in Wales. Where he had come from—when or how, no one could tell; but there he was, not a being having perceived his entrance till he stood by the pallet of the wounded female. He did not speak—he made no sign, but seemed resolute in remaining where he was; nor did any one molest him. Restoratives were administered to the recluse—surgical assistance was procured; and when Amelia and her companions took their departure, they enjoyed the satisfaction of leaving Jeannette restored to consciousness, and received assurances from the skilful practitioner that neither of the wounds was mortal, though great quiet

and care were required to prevent fatal consequences.

On first recovering from stupor, the recluse seemed agitated and alarmed at the sight of the aged man; but she soon grew more composed, and requested him to remain with her and pass his time in prayer. He complied with the request; and so mild and unassuming were his manners—so harmonious were the utterances of his voice, although it no longer retained its full-toned, manly powers—so fervent were his petitions, and eloquent his language, that he won upon the affections of all who visited poor Jeannette. Daily were the young ladies punctual in their attendance; and on one or two occasions, Aunt Alicia accompanied them; but her stay was but of short duration, as her presence seemed to distress the invalid, and some acrimonious words had more than once passed between them, the exact purport of which, however, was unknown except to themselves. The doctor gave strong hopes of Jeannette's recovery; but she was aged, and nature had undergone many severe trials in her younger years; so that after lingering several months in pain, her constitution gave way, and she closed her eyes in death, bequeathing the small store in her possession to the venerable man, who thenceforth took up his abode in the recess of the cliff.

Many were the sorrowing hearts and moistened cheeks that followed the humble Jeannette to the tomb. The neighbouring peasantry had derived numerous benefits from her hand, and nearly the whole of the inhabitants resident within the neighbourhood of the bay, even the young ladies from the cottage, attended the obsequies of one who had been a friend to all. Solemn and impressive as was the funeral service, it was far eclipsed by the affectionate appeal of the venerable hermit, who, in language exquisitely chaste and beautiful, though delivered in a feeble, tremulous voice, described the deathbed of the Christian, and directed their minds to the blessed reward of the believer. He noticed his past friendship with the deceased before the blight of sorrow had brought a premature winter on his heart—he commented on her virtues and her devotion to suffering humanity as worthy the emulation of the survivors, and drew a glowing picture of the everlasting rest of peace and happiness appointed for the faithful in this probationary world. There was not one who left the precincts of that lowly grave without feeling that the respect they had hitherto cherished for the amiable recluse was transferred to her aged representative, the venerable Anchorite of the Cliff.

The sequel proved it; for never did individual gain more upon the esteem of his fellow creatures than the new resident of the rocky cave: and in the course of a short time, Amelia was to be found as frequently as she ever had been upon the projecting ledge in front of the recess, and on most occasions she repaired to him for counsel in her emergencies and vexations. The recluse had been kind; but there was a rigidity in her manner, and often a harshness in her chiding that pained the mind. But Father Ambrose (for such was either the real or assumed name of the anchorite) was mild and gentle in all things, drawing men from evil rather by affection than severity. That he had once moved in the highest circles did not admit of a doubt: he knew much of the history of many of the principal families in the country, and his conversation always manifested a purity and an elegance that could have been acquired only by intercourse with polished society.

But a change was at hand! The Honourable Mr. Wentworth was gathered to his fathers; and by his death the immense estates of that house were added to the already great wealth of the Achesons, and the personal property was to accompany the estates on the condition that the name of Acheson was abandoned and that of Wentworth substituted by every member of the family. The wish of the testator was complied with, the desired name was legally assumed, and the arrangements necessary for the purpose of taking possession had the effect of inducing Mr. Acheson to emerge from the retirement in which he had been so long obscured, and to shake off the indolence and inactivity in which he had so long indulged.

Shortly after this event, another circumstance occurred equally calculated to awaken his energies and keep them in operation. This was a general election; and he was emphatically exhorted to exercise all his interest and influence in favour of the Pitt Administration, so as to give them an overpowering majority in the House of Commons. Attached to the principles of the Constitution, and fearing that a period had arrived which called for bold and resolute men to steer the vessel of the state amid the dangers that threatened, he at once became the zealous partisan and worked with unwearied diligence in the cause of ministers: his boroughs, his influence, his purse, were unspared, and he was by his powerful exertions enabled to throw a considerable accession of strength into the ministerial party, and an earldom (but without a secondary title) was the reward of his labour.

It was a new era in the existence of the young ladies. They entered warmly into the spirit of their father: it gave them some knowledge of the mighty world; and though still remaining at the Pleasance, it was constantly full of company, and they delighted in seeing the change which had been produced in his lordship's mode of life. The most splendid of the habitations bequeathed by Mr. Wentworth was a remarkably fine Gothic edifice (of which there are now but few remaining in the kingdom), standing on the northern coast of Devonshire, and thither the newly-created nobleman removed with his family. The wild and romantic grandeur of the scenery, together with the novelty of the change, kept alive for a time the feelings that had been awakened in his lordship's breast. He accompanied his daughters in their excursions, acted with becoming hospitality to his neighbours, and pleasing hopes were entertained that the lethargy into which he had formerly

become so deeply involved was gone for ever; and probably this would have been the case, could they have prevailed upon him to winter in the metropolis, so as to have kept up by association that animation of temperament which was calculated to subdue dejection. But Aunt Alicia, who saw in the restoration of her brother a diminution of her own authority, forbore to throw into the balance the weight of her persuasions, and a long dreary season setting in, the earl unfortunately relapsed into his hypochondriacal habits, though not to that extreme imbecility of intellect which unhappily had characterised his previous affliction.

No one more deeply regretted the departure of the Wentworths from the Wight than Father Ambrose; in fact, the visits of the young ladies had in a great measure become essential to his happiness—their presence seemed to afford him a renewal of vitality. All shared his regard; but he seemed most attached to Miss Waldegrave—though Amelia possessed his greatest confidence. At parting, the aged hermit was affected even to tears; and as he dispensed his blessing on their heads, his voice grew tremulous with emotion, and his limbs trembled with agitating distress. Nor was he to be forgotten or neglected during their absence: strict directions were left with the housekeeper at the Pleasance, not only to supply his wants, but also to administer to his comforts; whilst the smuggler Dawes was requested to watch over his welfare, so that he might not suffer molestation from the rude uncultivated inhabitants of the bay.

Young Acheson, now the Honourable Charles Wentworth, scarcely needed this accession of wealth to inflate his consummate pride, which rendered him despicable in the estimation of his superiors, the subject of ridicule amongst his messmates, and an object of dislike to the seamen. Relying on the powerful interest of his father to obtain his commission as soon as he had served his time, the youth paid but little attention to the acquisition of that necessary knowledge which alone could constitute him a clever navigator and a thorough practical seaman, or even to obtain sufficient information to give directions as an officer. He knew that reefing was to reduce a sail, and he had seen the operation repeatedly, but he could no more superintend it so as to be certain of its being well performed than he could fly; he had looked on whilst the cables were being spliced, but he was totally ignorant which way to pass the strands, supposing that it had been requisite for him to direct the men; he was aware of the necessity of tending a ship at single anchor, but which way to sheer her, so as to keep her from fouling, he was as guiltless of as the man in the moon; and as for clearing hawse, the whole was perfect mystery to him. He could repeat the names of the standing and running rigging, but that was nearly all, for he could neither clap a shroud over a mast-head, nor reeve a brace or a halliard. As for his navigation, he brought up his quadrant with the rest of the young gentlemen at seven bells, and knew how to find the latitude by observation within a handful of miles; but his day's work not unfrequently placed the ship some half degree or more inland when she was yet upon the wide ocean.

Still, the Honourable Mr. Wentworth preserved the strict line of etiquette it was necessary for an officer to observe. His dress was always conspicuously neat and handsome; he wore white kerseymere knee-breeches with gold knee-buckles and silk stockings in his day-watches, and such an enormity as a round jacket never embraced his person; he was studiously attentive to the touching of his hat whenever he appeared on his Majesty's quarter-deck; his salute to the captain and lieutenants was in strict accordance with general usage, and he exacted from his subordinates all the outward marks of respect with rigorous severity. If he had charge of a boat, no one was allowed to open his lips even in whispering conversation; nor would he permit one of them to land—so that the poor fellows were often compelled to return on board, after a hard pull, parched with thirst, and doubly weary with toil. He was wakeful and vigilant in his watch at night, and he found incessant means of annoying the watch should any of them have the presumption to try and compose himself to slumber. In short, he bade fair to become a perfect epitome of tyranny, with scarcely one redeeming quality to render him esteemed by the men.

Happily, there were not many of this description in the Royal Navy; yet there were some who were a disgrace to humanity, whose greatest pleasure seemed to be derived from the exercise of brutality over the people that were under them—six and seven-dozen captains, to whom a bleeding back was a pretty picture, and who considered a left-handed boatswain's mate a valuable acquisition. It is earnestly to be hoped such things will never occur again.

Charles Wentworth had only once visited his family since the elevation of his father, and then but for a short time. He was delighted with the opening beauty of Miss Waldegrave, whom he looked upon as destined at some future period to become his wife; and we must do him the justice to say, he was a great admirer of female loveliness, though inconstant and unsettled in the few attachments he had formed. An opportunity offering for him to go out to North America in an aristocratic seventy-four, he availed himself of it; though there was some lingering inclination to quit the service, and devote himself to the luxuries of the shore. However, on maturer consideration, he deemed it most advisable to remain his time for the purpose of obtaining his commission, as it would be the first step, whether at sea or on land, to future promotion; for he entertained no doubt of ultimately rising to the higher grades through services which would expose him to neither inconvenience nor danger.

Thus stood affairs when Lord Wentworth, urged by his sister, and desirous of bringing out the young ladies, quitted Devonshire for the neighbourhood of the metropolis. And the

journey produced a very beneficial effect on his lordship's mind: enlivening company dispelled the moody morbidness under which at times he fearfully laboured; the change of scene and the occasional bustle of business removed the heavy weight of oppression which burthened his mental faculties. Still, there were periods when his nervous system was so dreadfully deranged that the utmost care was requisite for his management; and when anything more than ordinary agitated him, his impulses were of the most strange and extraordinary character.

The introduction of our hero to the Wentworths has already been narrated; and we must now pass on to the time, when, influenced by his sister, who dreaded the punishment of the law upon her favourite, his lordship took a hasty flight with his son to the Pleasance in the Isle of Wight, where the heir to an earldom slunk away from the expected consequences of his brutality. In a few days afterwards, Captain Edmonds escorted the young ladies to the cottage; and during the journey his affectionate solicitude for the future welfare and happiness of his cousin Amelia raised her heart and her hopes to the very pinnacle of happiness: still he made no mention of love,—that love which fills the ardent soul with inexpressible joy, yet mingles pain with the sweetened draught of pleasure. His stay at the cottage was very brief. Charles was said to be absent,—but he was, in fact, in his own apartment, as he had no relish for the condemnation of the captain: his lordship was fast relapsing into imbecility; Aunt Alicia's authority was more firmly fixed than ever; and Edmonds, with grief and anger, pictured to himself much misery for his fair cousins. But the hour of parting arrived, and the almost heart-broken Amelia clung round the neck of the young soldier as he strained her to his breast: one word—only one word, such as she wished to hear, would have buoyed her up amidst the sorrow which threatened to overwhelm her; but he spoke it not, and the farewell was uttered by the agonised Amelia as if she cherished the idea that they would never meet again. In another week Edmonds embarked with his regiment for India, where he was present in all those brilliant achievements which laid the foundation of his colonel's future fame.

Tha gratification of the anchorite was extreme at again enjoying the society of the sisters; but he manifested evident symptoms of disappointment when he ascertained the absence of Miss Waldegrave. Charles Wentworth did not remain long on shore; his ship was ordered to the Mediterranean; and so unamiable had he rendered himself to all, that but little regret was expressed even by his aunt at his departure. Caroline shortly afterwards joined the party at the Pleasance, but no longer the shrinking child terrified by the violence of her guardian's sister: a few months' separation had wrought an entire change, and though respectful in her demeanour to Miss Alicia, yet the young lady acted with firmness, determined to enjoy something like a will of her own.

CHAPTER XVI.

'Vouchsafe to those who have not read the story,
That I may prompt them; and of such as have
I humbly pray them to admit the excuse
Of time, of numbers, and due course of things,
Which cannot in their huge and proper life
Be here presented.'

SHAKESPEARE.

WE must now pass over a period of four years, during which the Honourable Charles Wentworth and our hero obtained their commissions; and whilst the former retired upon his half-pay to enjoy the luxuries of the shore, the latter still fagged on unwearied in a service that he ardently loved. Captain Yorick had voluntarily quitted *Le Cerf* at the period of the mutiny at Spithead; his ship's company joined the mutineers, and their commander summoned them to the quarter-deck. It was a scene of intense interest. There stood Yorick by the wheel, his fine countenance expressive of mingled emotions—indignation, sorrow, and hope. He was greatly beloved by his people; they saw in him the ready, skilful seaman, and the daring, bold and intrepid leader. Near him were his officers, one of whom in particular was obnoxious to the men for his acts of tyranny—some asserted cruelty; but when was a tyrant merciful? The lieutenant in question was not without his fears of retaliation; he was apprehensive of receiving personal insult and degradation, perhaps accompanied by personal violence: yet the *esprit de corps* did not forsake him; animal courage he was by no means deficient in, and he proudly looked defiance at his enemies. Impatience and hauteur characterised the other lieutenants; the midshipmen relied implicitly upon their captain, feeling safe whilst under his protection; the master, a thorough tar of the old school, fretted and fumed, sometimes ejaculating a sort of half acknowledgment that the men had been goaded into revolt, and then heartily 'd—ing them for a set of mutinous rascals as disgraced themselves and the planks they trod upon.' The surgeon looked patiently on; whilst the purser, whose nipping propensities were by no means forgotten, stood abaft the mizen-mast, screwing up his mouth, and fidgeting first on one leg and then on the other, as if he was suffering severely from an attack of bowel complaint. The warrants—the nosegays of the navy, who had obtained their rank by hard servitude before the mast, could not help old remembrances; and whilst their hearts were with the men, they did not dare do otherwise than stick by their order. The boatswain had been a tartar—the agent and the instrument of tyranny: and, indeed, in those days the treatment which the men received was anything but that which was calculated to make them like the King's service. Mere boys, with scarcely a glimmering of knowledge of their profession, would raise their hands and strike a veteran who had nobly served his country and bled in her defence. When the hands were turned up, boatswain's mates were stationed at each hatchway to freshen their way on deck by starting them with rope's ends and rattans.

Accidents were constantly occurring ; there was a system of severity highly disgraceful to human beings. Yet when the British ensign was hoisted in the presence of an enemy, not a man shrunk from his post.

But where was our old friend the gunner? He chose a sort of neutral ground, midway between the rebels and their indignant commander ; and he acted as a sort of pivot to the master as he paced the deck with irregular strides, sometimes stopping short against Mr. Blocks, and venting the vexation of his spirit in anathemas, and then gratifying his spleen by listening to the imprecations of the gunner, who called down anything but blessings on the visual organs of 'Billy Pitt.' This of course was in a very subdued tone—a sort of audible whisper, heard only by the parties themselves.

And there about the mainmast and the forepart of the quarter-deck, as far aft as the Jacob's ladders, clustered the men, some looking mighty queer and sheepish, and others with countenances that nothing could change or daunt, as if resolutely determined to go through the work they had begun. The greater portion, however, seemed overawed by the presence of the captain, and frequently gave him sidelong glances to catch the expression of his face and see what he was likely to be at. Yorick let them stand for several minutes till their position became uneasy from suspense ; and then coolly mounting the skylight, he swept his eyes over the assembled company, and a dark scowl hung upon his brow. 'And so, my men,' said he, with calm deliberation, 'you have thought proper to set discipline at defiance, and to outrage the laws of your country! Yes, my men—*My* men—no! you are not *my* men, for then you would have stood by your captain, and have shown to the fleet that you looked up to him for protection against injury. Men! no, you are not men ; you are mutinous rascals, who have hove overboard every manly principle! Here I stand to accuse you of one of the worst of crimes that seamen can be guilty of, that of rebellion against the duty you owe your country. That's my text! England stands pre-eminent in naval glory ; the British ensign is triumphant wherever it is hoisted! Who has placed her in that proud station—who has made her flag respected?' He paused a minute, whilst the glistening eyes of the tars seemed to respond to the question. He then proceeded : 'It is the prowess of her blue-jackets has done this!' The compliment was just, and in the enthusiasm of the moment the people were about to cheer, but the voice of their commander thundered forth, 'Silence, fore and aft! as mutineers your cheers disgust me ; it is the voice of treason from the tongues of traitors! Be what you ever were till this moment! return to your allegiance to your King, return to your obedience to your officers, and I will join your cheers—nay, more, I will give the signal and show the rebels that you dare be men.' There was a whispering among the ship's company, and many countenances manifested great restlessness of purpose. Yorick saw it, and continued : 'I was saying that England's brave tars had made her what she is ; will you then disgrace the colour of your cloth—will you dowse your true blue? will you give the enemies of your country an advantage? will you tell them that Britannia no longer rules the waves?' No response was heard, though it was evident there was a mental struggle amongst the ringleaders. 'Who has prompted you to this? what lubber has been pouring poison in your ears? An enemy hath done this! and will you strike to an enemy? Your country has been proud of your services—will you make her blush for your treason? You have nobly sustained your honour in the hour of peril—will you tarnish your good deeds by desertion? Look at those colours,' pointing to the ensign, 'the emblem of your bravery! the boast of your countrymen! the genius that has presided over the hour of victory! will you see it humbled before the tri-coloured rag—dowsed like a widow's pig—trailed under the head-rails of a revolutionary craft?' Here the excitement amongst the assembled seamen grew irresistible. At first there was a single monosyllable uttered, 'No:' it was repeated, went from mouth to mouth till it swelled into one general utterance, and 'No! we are ready to fight : show us the enemy, and they shall find we can stand by our colours to the last!'

'Hurrah!' shouted the animated gunner, and was quickly joined by the master ; 'Hurrah!—I tould you so! D——n me, all's right again!'

'Silence, officers!' roared Yorick ; 'and but that I respect your feelings, which I know from my own must be powerfully agitated, I should deem you fit objects for severe rebuke.' Then again turning to the people—'Men, will you return, then, to your duty?'

The excitement had in some measure subsided from its ebullition, and for a minute or two no answer was returned. The seamen looked at each other or hung down their heads, till a remarkably tall handsome man, about five-and-thirty years of age, after one or two essays, at last stepped boldly out from among the rest. There was an instantaneous commotion, and a general buzz of approbation succeeded as every eye was directed towards him. A flush of anger rushed over Yorick's features :—his first impulse was to spring upon the man and fell him to the deck ; but an instant's reflection served to deter him : he had himself provoked the demonstration by his question, and proudly raising his head, he stood calmly awaiting the announcement of the tar ;—besides, Will Scott was one of the best behaved and most trustworthy men in the ship ; he was captain of the forecastle, and highly esteemed by both the officers and the crew. 'May I speak, yer honour?' asked Will, respectfully touching the forelock of his hair, for his straw hat was in his hand. Yorick bent in token of acquiescence ; and, whilst the most earnest attention prevailed, the seaman began, —'I ain't much skilled, yer honour, in the argyfication o' things as is out o' my knowledge, nor do I know how to make out long speeches ; but yer honour needs none o' my calculations to tell you that which is laid down in your own chart

of the human heart—that a man's a man, and has all the feelings of a man, whether he ounly bends a suit of jacket and trowsers, or sails large in his long togs and scraper:—Captain Yorick knows it arn't the duds any more than it is the station where a seaman, whether officer or man, performs his dooty. As for yer honour, there's never a man, from the figure-head to the taffral, but loves and respects you, or as will dare to say, "Black's the white o' yer eye," seeing as you have always treated us well—rewarding them as you promised to reward, and punishing them as desarved punishment. We've not none on us got nothing to say again' you, for a better captain never stepped 'twixt stem and starn, for tarring all hands with the same brush. But then, yer honour, we has our grievances; and I hopes it ull be no offence, yer honour, if I axes leave to speak out plainly a bit o' my mind in regard o' myself and my shipmates.' Yorick shouted, 'Go on, my man!'—'Well, then, yer honour,' continued Will, whilst breathless silence pervaded the group of tars,—'Well, then, yer honour, it's just as this here—and I knows the posterior I places myself in by shoving myself forud,—I'm saying, yer honour, it's just as this here: we tries to do our dooty to the best of our 'bility—and nobody can do more;—we obeys orders whatsomever they may be, and in course, as a nat'ral consequence, we don't like ill usage: and, both God A'mighty and the devil knows, we have had a double allowance o' that sarved out to us lately by Muster ——.'

The officer, whose name had been uttered, eyed the speaker with proud disdain—his face reddened with anger, and he was about to interrupt the seaman in strong language, when Captain Yorick turned to him and said, 'Wait, sir; you shall have an opportunity—let us first hear what these mutinous rascals have to say.'

'I am no mutinous rascal, Captain Yorick,' responded Will Scott respectfully; 'yer honour knows that "rascal" don't belong to me. I stand here to claim—ay, to demand—my rights, and the rights of my shipmates, who have been suffering injury and oppression. I am doing that which yer honour would do, if, instead of being captain of this here frigate, you wore a blue jacket among the rest.' Yorick felt this, for he was aware that there were many things in the service that required amendment and redress, and he himself had vainly endeavoured to induce the Admiralty to better the condition of the seamen. 'Well, then, in course, yer honour, we wants to square the yards o' conscience by the lifts and braces of honesty; we wants better treatment from the officers—our full allowance of grub—the requests of the fleet complied with, and damnification for all chafes and rubs by the way; and, with all due honour and respects, we begs that you will send Muster —— out of the ship, in company with the boasun.'

'Never!' shouted Yorick in a determined tone. 'If they have done you wrong, there are laws by which they may be tried. But do you think I would yield to intimidation—do you think I would punish an officer without a trial? I dare not do it—I will not do it; and if you persevere in your mutinous designs, I will leave you to your fate.'

'Captain Yorick,' said the seaman solemnly, 'we have rove the yard-rope for them as misbehaves;' and he pointed to the fore-yard-arm. 'We should be all sorry for you to leave us: cunly say that you will remain aboard, and every soul fore and aft shall obey orders or suffer for it. Grant our requests, and——'

'Out of your own mouth will I judge you, my man,' returned Yorick, rather impatiently interrupting him. 'You have rove a yard-rope to preserve discipline—thereby showing the impossibility of carrying on the war without it: how, then, can your officers expect to keep the people in order but by strictness and attention?'

'But not cruelty, yer honour,' responded Will; 'and that's the thing as we complains on. Howsomever, we are detarmined to stand by one another—meaning no disparagement to yer honour, who, we hopes, will keep command of the ship.'

'Not an hour—not a minute longer than I find you remain obedient to your officers,' returned Yorick. 'You fancy that this mutiny is raised by upright minds who have your good in view. No such thing—it is your enemies that have urged it on! Look at your country battling the watch with a nation that ardently longs for the dominion of the seas:—will you then madly desert your duty—will you see the ensign union downwards and yet abandon the vessel in distress? What injures your country must injure you: and if the craft is to sink through your folly, why then, by ——, you will all go to —— together!'

'We are ready to meet the enemy, yer honour,' said Will Scott; 'clap us alongside, and they shall find we arn't forgot how to put wad to our shot and ram home with a rally. All we wants is our due. Speak, men,' shouted he, turning to the ship's company, 'arn't you ready to stand by your guns?'—'Yes, yes—ay, ay!' 'We loves our country, and likes our captain, but no tyrants!' 'No tyrants!'—Such were the responses; but the latter swelled into one general chorus loud and long.

'I will give you ten minutes to consider what you will do,' exclaimed Yorick; 'and upon your decision depends whether I retain my command or not. Consult amongst yourselves, and remember I am not to be trifled with!' He then went below to his cabin; and though only absent exactly ten minutes to a moment, on his return to the quarter-deck he ascertained that the whole of the officers had been decoyed before the gangways, and prevented from coming aft; and the obnoxious lieutenant had been forced into the jolly-boat, and was then half-way towards South-sea beach. 'You have decided, men!' shouted he; 'not another word. Call that shore-boat alongside: I will never command a set of mutineers!' and in a few minutes afterwards he quitted the frigate.

It is no part of my intention to carry the his-

tory of the mutiny further. At its suppression Captain Yorick again took command of *Le Cerf*, and in 1800 was removed into the *Jason*, a frigate of a larger class,—the same warm-hearted but strict disciplinarian he ever was. The gunner had followed him; and the once little Parker, now a fine young man, had through the interest of his chief mounted the white lapels, and bade fair to become an ornament to the service.

General Edmonds and the corporal continued to chalk their way through life without a shadow of a change, except that they were more busily engaged in the model-room at the Rumbletumble, which had been entirely rebuilt on a new principle, on account of a *trifling* accident which had happened to the original whilst testing the charges of some newly-invented rockets, which *inadvertently* exploded and pitched the roof into the lake, laid prostrate the walls, and multiplied the models in an astonishing degree. Their schemes, however, had now become so numerous, and the general was so constantly on the hatch, that Singleton was compelled to have his pockets considerably enlarged, for the purpose of stowing away embryo patents — self-acting mortars, improved field pieces—pontoons,—in short, 'a little of everything in the combustible way,' as the corporal observed, including a new apparatus for boring cannon.

Captain Edmonds—or rather Major Edmonds, for to that rank had he been advanced—was still in the East, earning fame and wealth with his gallant colonel, who gave promise of that excellence in the field which subsequently raised him to a dukedom.

The Misses Wentworth were still in single blessedness, and Amelia never ceased to cherish the warmest affection for her soldier-cousin. Offers had been made, suitors had proposed; but she resisted every overture, devoting her existence to the object of her regard. Very little intercourse had taken place between the general and his lordship since the assassin-like attempt upon Ten-thousand; indeed, Aunt Alicia, whose temper became more violent and arbitrary as she increased in years, had effectually prevented every manifestation of remaining friendship. Miss Waldegrave had grown into full-blown beauty, and, like Amelia, undeviatingly adhered to the vows she had pledged to our hero; although for some considerable time she had received no communication from his hands, yet so satisfied was she of his integrity, that she rightly attributed it to its true cause,—the surreptitious detention of her letters by the Honourable Lieutenant Wentworth, who, making sure of her fortune as well as her person, paid but little attention to his expected future bride; though his gallantry (if it may be so misnomered) in other quarters was no very profound secret.

Mr. Hector retained his sacred office as a humble curate, and had substantial occasions to remember the christening of our hero, both from the young lieutenant and his worthy patron the gunner. Mrs. Hector was still the same kind, affectionate, and Christian-like partner—treading in the path that leads to everlasting happiness hereafter. Mr. Brief perseveringly devoted himself to his professional avocations, and unremitting in his endeavours to ascertain some clue to the origin of Ten-thousand's being deserted in so helpless and cruel a manner. Only one incident had occurred: and this took place shortly after the affair in the metropolis, when Wentworth used his knife upon young Blocks.

The little lawyer was sitting in his office one morning at his characteristic occupation, making the most of his time, when a lady was announced, and a female well dressed in deep mourning was ushered into the room: she was of a commanding figure, and still retained evidences of great early loveliness, which appeared to have been prematurely withered by discordant passions. Now, Lawyer Brief was a confirmed bachelor as far as it regarded family matters, though one of the most constant and attentive husbands to his business, for he was wedded to his profession, and the fruits of the union were extremely productive. Still, he was rather shy of lady clients, particularly lady clients in widow's weeds, for he generally found that, from having been over-indulged by the dear good man defunct, they were self-willed and difficult to manage; or, on the other hand, if their mourning was mere outward show and the heart rejoiced at being emancipated from tyrannic control, they determined to make the utmost of their liberty by insisting upon having their own way in everything, and both imagined that the law, and not unfrequently even justice, ought to be swayed and guided according to their own peculiar views and wishes.

The handsome woman now before him was arrayed in the usual symbols of widowhood, that set her off to great advantage, and her look was that of one who seemed far more calculated to enforce obedience than to follow advice. The little lawyer took a rapid personal inspection through his glasses as she approached towards him; and then, throwing his spectacles upon his forehead in a sort of intellectual manner, he arose, and politely handed the lady a chair. This was the first time for many years he had stooped to such condescension, and the clerk was struck with astonishment at seeing his office thus taken out of his hands by a *coup de main;*—indeed, the little man himself seemed so surprised and embarrassed by such a prompt act of gallantry, that, after seconding it by an ungracious bow, he hastily retreated to his high stool, and having laid his arms upon the table, he firmly rested his main body upon them, as if posting himself in a favourable position to concentrate his forces and resist all further attacks.

'Your name, sir, is Brief,' said the lady, in a voice of musical sweetness. The ungracious lawyer nodded. 'You advertised, some years ago——' and she sighed so heavily, that something, which to those who did not thoroughly understand him might have been taken for a sympathetic response, issued from the solicitor; but it was only a sort of grunt to which he had habituated himself when displeased: indeed, sighing with him was out of the question: he

used to say that 'he never could discover how people sighed—it was making a pair of bellows of the heart.' But the fact was, some twenty or thirty summers back, Lawyer Brief did entertain a desire to take unto himself a wife; yet, not having sufficient leisure to look for a female suited to his purpose, and still less time to spare in courtship, he boldly advertised for the precious commodity; and the applications were so numerous, and the characters of the parties so diversified, that he was very nearly driven mad, and being unable to come to any decision, he abandoned the scheme in utter dispair of ever succeeding to his mind. This it was that elicited the aforesaid grunt when the lady opened the campaign with, 'You advertised, some years ago——' for the man of the law beheld not only in his imagination, but also in corporeal substance before him, an applicant who was by no means unlikely to assault and carry him by storm. The lady, however, seemed rather pleased than otherwise by the demonstration, for most probably she deceived herself into a belief that it was an utterance of commiseration, and she again commenced, 'You advertised, some years ago——'

'I did, madam,' replied the lawyer, interrupting her, for he thought it more wise at once to prevent her from advancing her position than to have the unpleasant and, in all probability, difficult task of beating her back again from her 'vantage ground—'I did, madam,' said he; 'and if your only business here relates solely to that unfortunate advertisement, I may as well cut short our interview by telling you that further trouble is needless.'

'Oh, then, I suppose it has terminated fortunately,' said the lady, by no means abashed by the repulsive behaviour of the solicitor. 'It was a strange affair apparently, and you must be happy that you have found——'

'No, madam,' returned the lawyer impatiently, rising from his stool, 'I have not found—I never shall find,—d—n me! I never *will* find——'

'Then the advertisement must still be in full force,' returned the lady placidly, as if she had some object to gain. 'I thought the foundling—'

'The what, madam?' interrupted the lawyer, as he again seated himself at the table and took up his former position of defence.

'The foundling, sir,' answered the lady. 'You advertised, some years ago, relative to a foundling, I believe; and that advertisement has been repeated at subsequent intervals. Am I not correct?'

Brief breathed freely again. He had been premature in his conclusions; but now at once shaking off all embarrassment when he found it was a mere matter of business, and not of matrimony, he answered in the affirmative. 'Beg pardon: little mistake—you are correct.'

'Well, then, sir, I am induced to suppose you are able to inform me of the particulars of that event,' said the lady. Brief nodded his assent, and a look of reproach seemed to pass across the widow's features. 'Some of the child's apparel is in your possession,' continued the lady; and again the lawyer nodded, for he made it a maxim never to throw away even a monosyllable unnecessarily. 'Pray, may I be permitted to see it?' inquired the widow.

The lawyer bowed acquiescence; and drawing down his spectacles to their proper *hunting* position, he added, 'Favour me, madam—your name, if you please?'

'Most certainly,' replied the lady, with a winning look that might have warmed an iceberg. 'My name is Sinclair—Lady Hortensia Sinclair, the widow of the deceased Lieutenant-General Sinclair;' and she looked proudly and keenly at the lawyer to ascertain what effect the announcement would produce upon him.

Mr. Brief was certainly not unmoved at the manner and title of his visitor; but the movement was merely to dip his pen in the ink; and, in a stiff, cramped hand, he wrote what looked very much like bits of burnt straw strewed over the paper: it was the date and the lady's name, which, having acomplished, he uttered, 'Proceed.'

Apparently mortified that she had made no sensible impression on the lawyer's heart, the lady frowned, but it instantly vanished again. 'Do you require my lineage—my birth and parentage?' said she.

'Use your own pleasure, my lady,' returned the man of the law, with a complacency of demeanour that pleased her.

'It is hardly requisite,' responded the smiling lady: 'and as for residence, I have so recently arrived in England, that I have not yet had time to settle my place of habitation. Circumstances that it is not at present necessary to recapitulate have induced me to entertain strong conjectures that the infant who was so inhumanly deserted—in fact, the dress will most probably inform me whether the foundling is or is not a near relation of mine, now, no more. If it should be so, I shall, as a matter of course, relate every particular to you; and if not, I shall be spared the pain of entering upon the subject.'

At this moment the clerk entered and handed over a slip of paper to his principal, who having perused its purport, hastily wrote some lines beneath those he had read, and returned it: the subordinate then left the room, 'I can have no objection to show you the things, my lady,' said Lawyer Brief—'anything that can tend to elucidate the mystery is certainly most desirable; and happy shall I be if my young client can honourably claim such respectable alliance.'

'Pardon me, sir,' answered the lady, 'I fear the term honourable, according to the general acceptation of the term in such matters, cannot be applied to his origin; but if I find my conjectures are right, the youth shall not want a friend.'

'It appears, my lady, that you are aware of his existence,' said the lawyer, as if making a mere casual observation.

The lady looked confused, but promptly replied, 'I am aware of it, Mr. Brief,—nay, more, I have seen him; and I confess the likeness to those who are gone first struck me, even before I knew

a word of his story. But that also was repeated to me by a young friend of my late husband's—Captain Edmonds. So that all I am desirous of doing is to examine the articles of dress, to ascertain whether they will afford any evidence to confirm my predisposition to belief. Are you satisfied?' And approaching the table, she spread a note of the Bank of England for ten pounds before the eyes of the lawyer.

Mr. Brief looked first at the lady, then at the note, and then at the lady again. 'I *am* satisfied,' said he, in a firm and decided tone; 'you shall inspect the things.' He then opened a drawer of his table, and took out a pistol, which he laid upon his papers. 'This is a precaution I always use, my lady, when I open my iron safe: it is best to be upon one's guard, for there are lurking villains constantly on the watch for plunder, who would not hesitate to murder as well as rob if they expected an adequate booty.' He arose, took a bunch of keys from the same drawer, and proceeded to his iron depository, watched with the most eager and intense interest by the widow. The folding portals of the case were thrown open, and the bundle containing the dress in which young Blocks was discovered, as well as a succinct account of the occurrence, was brought forth and cautiously displayed. The shirt, the necklace, and the ring underwent a rigid scrutiny, and especially the latter: the lady's hand trembled whilst she held it, and the three articles were clutched fast in her left hand, when suddenly snatching up the pistol and presenting the muzzle at the lawyer, she retreated towards the door

'I thought so,' said the cool propounder of the statutes, as he interposed to stop her progress.

'Let me pass,' exclaimed the widow, with vehemence, 'or you are a dead man this instant! —Let me pass, man, or I'll fire!'

'Allow me to load the pistol first, my lady,' uttered Brief, with a sarcastic tone. 'Here, Saunders!' he shouted, and a scuffling in the passage ensued, as if some contest was being carried on close to the door amidst oaths and execrations. 'Have the goodness to deposit those things you have seized upon the table, Lady Sinclair,—if such is your title, which we shall see presently. You really had better comply, or to gaol you shall go for an attempt at robbery.'

The lady obeyed,—she laid the articles down; Brief bundled them up together, and the threefold bolts of his iron safe soon had them in safe keeping: but he had scarcely turned the key, when the office-door was burst open, and in flew Joe Breeze and Saunders, contending with two powerful men. Neither the lawyer nor his clerk were equal to one of the hostile party; in fact, he was too much for both of them together, and they speedily measured their lengths upon the floor. Old Joe battled the watch stoutly against his opponents, who, fearful that the noise would bring fresh assistance, followed the widow in her hasty departure from the premises. Joe Breeze (as he himself described it) topped his boom and made sail in chase; but they'd got the long start of him, and when he reached the door leading into the street, it was shut to with violence and locked on the outside, so as to make them all three prisoners.

Who they were, or what their motive could be, remained a mystery: they were foiled in their effort, and, as Brief declared, 'took nothing by their motion.' He had, in fact, suspected from the first, and the slip of paper handed to him by Saunders informing him that two stout men were in the outer office in a great degree confirmed his suspicions: he wrote in reply, 'Send for assistance,' and the clerk had endeavoured to obtain it: in fact, three or four constables arrived in a few minutes after the escape of the party, who liberated the trio from confinement. Old Joe had dropped in merely by accident, and thus became engaged in the affray.

But now a word or two of Joe Breeze and his worthy consort (as he called her). They had been constantly talking of shifting their berth, and yet remained as fast moored as ever. Joe had become a truly wealthy man—could calculate his thousands, and even his ten-thousands, in the funds, whilst his estates accumulated by several admirable purchases both in number and value;—in fact, he was himself, though only landlord of the Roaring Boreas, enabled to send no less than three *representatives* to the legislative body of the nation. Nightly was the subject discussed between them of retiring from *public* life to one of the snug cosy places in the country: they seldom went to bed without expressing a determination to make a change on the succeeding day; but the following morning found them as busy as ever,—Mrs. Breeze in her bar regarding all around her with pleased animation, and Muster Breeze blowing his cloud and spinning a yarn with his old shipmates and messmates—discussing the management of the fleet and the governing of the nation.

The battle of the Nile was fought—the conquerors and their prizes returned to England—and the Roaring Boreas was chock-full of the victors from morning till night. Then did honest Joe luxuriate, then were the tables marked with more plans of the fight than ever charts could be found in the hydrographical office; then were anchors let go—ships brought up by the stern with springs upon the cable; in short, the action was fought over again in five hundred different ways, and frequently amid as much smoke as obscured the actual contest.

Only very little more than a twelvemonth had elapsed since the mutiny, and two great and important victories had been gained—Camperdown and the Nile. Here, then, was proof positive that British tars would nobly sustain the pre-eminence of their country's flag. But this was not considered sufficient:—at a meeting held in the great room at the Roaring Boreas, an address of congratulation to his Majesty was proposed; an address that, whilst it rejoiced in the splendid achievements of the navy, was also to express the warmest attachment to his Majesty's royal person: and who so able to get it drawn up and to present it to the sovereign

as the veteran Joe Breeze himself? The thing was determined on—Joe's consent obtained—a rough draft of the address drawn up by the worthy landlord, and carried to Lawyer Brief to be polished.

It is much to be regretted that the document itself cannot be given: it was certainly a most characteristic affair, and the lawyer, knowing the humour of the Sovereign and the feelings of the honest tars, took especial care whilst polishing that none of its originality should be lost.

The affair got wind; the address was signed by thousands—even officers felt gratified at signing their names to the record; and Joe at length, having been plentifully supplied with clean shirts, hose, and nightcaps, made sail, in a chaise-and-four, decorated with blue ribands and a small union-jack in the bows, for the metropolis, and furnished with a letter of introduction from the Port Admiral to one of the Lords of the Admiralty.

Various were the conjectures and rumours as he proceeded along the road. The editors of the provincial papers, having nothing but their own conjectures to rest upon (for Joe was by no means communicative), were in ecstasies, for they could make just what they pleased of it. Some announced fresh victories; others a rattling mutiny—several thought there was peace; whilst all agreed there must be something. The paragraphs were duly copied into the London papers, and in a few hours the whole kingdom was as wise as the provincial editors themselves.

Honest Joe pushed on his way: he loved quick sailing, and his presents to the post-boys ensured speedy travelling. When they touched the tip, they also tipped the wink to one another; and the 'All's right, yer honour!' was an intimation well understood.

The veteran had formed a grand idea of London. It was in the forenoon when he arrived; and away dashed the vehicle over Westminster Bridge through the short street, and turning with swiftness to the right for the Admiralty. Nobody could conjecture what it meant; and yet everybody knew, or pretended to know (which amounts to nearly the same thing) all about it. 'A battle had been fought—Boney had been taken prisoner—Joe was the avant-courier—and the captive was to follow on a visit to his Majesty, and be kept in a cage like a parrot's somewhere in Hyde Park.'

At the Admiralty the worthy veteran found the lord he had the letter for, who entered joyously into the spirit of the thing; and after a short conversation with Joe, his lordship mounted the vehicle, dressed out as it was, and accompanied the honest seaman to the Home Secretary of State, and rumour applied all her brazen trumpets to sound the occurrence. In fact, so many attempts had been made to seduce the seamen of the Royal Navy from their duty, and so many reports had been circulated to show that they were disaffected as well as discontented, that the present demonstration was viewed with much gratification by the members of his Majesty's Government, and honest Joe found himself, without knowing why, a very important personage indeed.

The next day but one was a levee-day; and notwithstanding all Joe's remonstrances, he was to be rigged out in a court dress, regulation sword, and bag for his hair. But then what was he to do with his pigtail, that hung down his back as low as his waist, and might, upon a pinch, have served for a jolly-boat's mizen-mast? It was, however, arranged that it should be brought down inside the collar of his coat; and the bag hanging without would conceal that any such monstrosity as his enormous outrigger existed. All this was sadly against the veteran's inclination, particularly the 'casing his lower stanchions' in black silk tights, which he declared 'was an onnat'ral thing to expect from a seaman.' But no persuasions could induce him to wear his neckerchief in any other way than loosely knotted round his neck; and he determined to display his silver chain and call. Some strong argumentative disputes took place between Joe and the person who had been recommended to show him the lions of the metropolis; but the veteran was obliged to yield, for fear of giving offence to the sovereign he loved.

The auspicious period arrived, the Admiralty Lord's carriage took him up, and together they set out to the levee, old Joe receiving instructions relative to his behaviour as they proceeded. Now, notwithstanding the veteran had allowed the barber to stow away his tail so as entirely to conceal it in the back-ground, he nevertheless felt it a degradation to be deprived of so handsome an ornament, and being free from observation and restraint as the vehicle rolled rapidly along through the streets, he contrived to haul it out from durance, and, by a little manœuvring, to place it in its natural position; so that a thick club, not much unlike the fag-end of a stream cable, was soon seen hanging between his shoulders, surmounted by the handsome silk bag which court fashion dictated as necessary to etiquette.

The levee was very crowded, and the worthy seaman's set out excited much pleasantry in the circle; but Joe had eyes and ears for scarcely anybody except his sovereign,—though he was somewhat relieved from his first embarrassment by observing near his royal master a tall spare gentleman, with, as Joe described him, 'his nose a cock-bill.' This was none other than the Prime Minister of England, to whom the veteran had been introduced the day before, and whom he instantly recognised. The Port Admiral in his letter to the Lord of the Admiralty had stated the services rendered by Breeze at the general election; and a man who could command three members was not to be despised. At the Home Secretary's they had seen Mr. Pitt, who warmly acknowledged the obligation, and proffered his friendship in return; so that Joe felt at his ease when he saw him again.

There were also two other persons by the side of the reigning monarch, each destined in succession to fill the throne of England: these were the Prince of Wales and the Duke of Clarence,

the latter in a uniform the sight of which warmed the heart of the old mariner. Now his Royal Highness instantaneously detected the nautical features of the veteran, and, approaching towards him, uttered a friendly hail that struck upon Joe's tympanum like the 'pipe to grog,' it was so joyous; and, to the astonishment of all present, he responded with a hearty 'What cheer, what cheer?' But just at this moment his turn came for presentation; and, without being at all daunted with the gorgeous spectacle, Joe boldly, though awkwardly, for his sword got between his legs and bothered him, advanced to the royal presence. In fact, the bearer of the seamen's address was at that moment perfectly qualified, in his own estimation, for the important undertaking with which he had been entrusted: it was a point of imperative duty, and he set about it as he would any especial employ on board the ship he loved to decorate, confident that he was fully able to perform it, and determined that the work should neither disgrace himself nor the barky to which he was attached.

'May it please your Majesty, Mr. Breeze, of your Majesty's Royal Navy, with an address from the seamen at Plymouth,' said the admiralty lord, displaying the old seaman in full fig.

'Breeze—Breeze?' said the King, giving Joe one of his peculiarly shrewd looks; 'what ship, eh? what ship?'

'The Roaring Boreas, an't please yer Majesty's honour,' responded Joe laughingly, and giving first a knowing twist to his *club* tail, and secondly, a characteristic hitch to his silk tights.

'What? what?' uttered the King—'Roaring what? Oh, ay—Boreas—Boreas—a Breeze in the Roaring Boreas, eh? What rank, what rank? steady Breeze, I hope, but what rank?' when, observing the silver chain and call round the veteran's neck, he added, 'Oh, I see, I see—boatswain, eh? boatswain—Boatswain Breeze—handsome call—*blow* it well, Mr. Breeze, eh?' and the good-humoured monarch laughed.

'God bless yer honour's Majesty!' answered Joe, touching the forelock of his silvery hair, and making a scrape with his foot and a bend with his head that threw his enormous tail over his shoulder, 'I arn't a boasun, seeing as I never had the honour of sporting a warrant whilst under the pennant; but I've sarved your Majesty man and boy five-and-forty years, and ud be ready to sarve yer Majesty again whensomever you should be pleased to ax me. Though, for the matter o' that, your Majesty, I strive to do my best even out of commission, as Billy Pitt there—I humbly axes his honour's pardon—I means Muster Billy Pitt, can testify.'

'Good, good—very good!' said the easily-pleased monarch; 'Mr. Breeze and Billy Pitt! But—but—but the address—the address.' Observing Joe was again about to speak, he added, 'What—what?—stay—stay!—the address—read the address.'

This Joe did with a very good grace, giving the words their proper emphasis, to the infinite delight and gratification of the good-tempered king, who had a strong regard for his navy, and of Mr. Pitt, who had in some measure apprised his Majesty of the veteran's claims to consideration.

'The seamen of the fleet at Plymouth, eh?' said the King, when the veteran had ceased reading the document; 'and signed, too—signed by—let me see—let me see——'

'Upwards of four thousand, an 't please yer Majesty,' responded Joe, again twitching his tail behind him—'all hearty souls, and ready to fight the devil, if so be as he should hoist the tri-colour ensign.'

'Hush! hush!' returned the King; 'never, never call names. But tell them, Mr. Breeze—tell the seamen I receive their congratulations with pleasure, and am gratified by their expressions of attachment: it shall be my study to watch over and promote their welfare, as much as they have manifested a determination to defend their king and country.'

This was uttered slowly, clearly, and with strong feeling that made a powerful impression upon old Joe, who, on his Majesty graciously extending his hand to him to kiss, grasped it with eager enthusiasm in his hard, horny fingers, and gave it an honest, cordial shake that tickled old George's fancy mightily; and though he tried to look grave, yet it only rendered the scene more ludicrous, and for a few seconds all court etiquette was set at defiance.

'God A'mighty bless yer royal Majesty for the honour as you've done me in shaking hands with a poor humble tar! All I am and all I have is heartily at yer Majesty's sarvice, except this here call, which was guv me by General Elliott arter the siege o' Giberalter, for manhandling them there French and Spaniards.'

In the excitement of his narration, which had induced him to throw himself into attitude, Joe's tail had again, somehow or other, swung bodily over his shoulder, and looked like a swivel on the present. 'Siege of Gibralter, eh?' said the King—'siege of Gibralter—grand tail wonderful tail: kneel down, Mr. Breeze—eh, Pitt, eh?' The minister bowed with stiff formality. 'There—kneel, kneel, kneel—kneel down, Mr. Breeze!—Joseph, isn't it, eh?—isn't it, Joe—Joseph, eh? Joseph Breeze, kneel down.'

The words 'grand tail,' 'wonderful tail,' Joe had promptly applied to his *tale* of Gibraltar and the call, and it tended greatly to gratify the old tar's self-love; but to kneel in his silk tights was another matter—it amounted nearly to impossibility—and the repeated commands of the Sovereign still urging him, he exclaimed, 'Well, then, I'm——' the rest was stoppered, for the eye of his royal master was upon him, and he felt rebuked before he uttered the oath. 'But it's all in regard o' these here consarns, yer Majesty,' said he, somewhat abashed at the predicament in which he was placed. 'They would brace me sharp up, though I knew it was going free before yer Majesty I should be; and now here I am worse off nor a marine in purser's slops—hard up, jammed like Jackson! Howsomever, here goes for a bend anyhow, as I

hopes yer Majesty's honour and glory is a-going to guv me a blessing;' and down he dropped upon both hands and knees, ultimately raising himself upon the latter, whilst the ripping of seams, the cracking of stitches, and the chattering of the main stuff itself, gave evident testimony that 'there was something rotten in the state of Denmark.'

The monarch having received a sword from the hands of an attendant, held it over the veteran's head; and then applying the flat part pretty smartly to his shoulders, he uttered, 'Arise, Sir Joseph Breeze; there, there, there—get up, man, get up—rise, rise; I've knighted you, and you are now Sir Joseph; get up, get up.' But seeing that the worthy tar, either from the accumulated weight of his new dignity, or the tightness of his new breeches, could not accomplish the task, the King caught hold of his arm: 'Come, come, come,' said he, 'I'll assist you.'

At this moment, one of the lords in waiting, observing how his Majesty was engaged, hastened forward to relieve him from his burden; upon which Joe exclaimed with vehemence, 'Hands off, you lubber!—do you think his Majesty can't do it himself?' and making a powerful demonstration (for such it most certainly was), Sir Joseph Breeze was set upon his legs.

'Now, now—go, go,' said the King; 'tell the sailors—tell them not to mutiny again, but —but to be good lads and beat the French.'

'Then I'm d—— if I don't' returned Joe, so overpowered by his emotions as to forget the anointed presence in which he stood.

'Mustn't swear—never swear,' said his Majesty in a tone half reproof, half remonstrance: 'Bible says, "Swear not at all;" read, read the Bible Go, now, go:' and turning to the admiralty lord who had introduced the veteran, he added, 'Take, take, take him away. Never swear—bad habit, swearing—meant honestly though;—large tail, monstrous tail. There, there—good-bye, sailor, good-bye!'

'God A'mighty bless yer Majesty!' responded Joe with a schoolboy expression of contrition on his countenance. 'I owns to the slapsis lingo, and is heartily ashamed on it.' He then added, with slow voice and with strong emotion, 'Good-bye, my royal master! May you ride it out in the smooth waters of happiness here, with the port of heaven under your lee; and when you slips your cables, may you next be moored in the haven of eternal peace and blessedness!'

The prayer was from the heart—it was solemnly, fervently uttered; and many a deep though silent 'Amen!' responded to the petition from that high and titled assembly. The veteran took his departure from the palace, and was invited to pass some time with his representatives; but he preferred a visit to some of his old shipmates at Greenwich Hospital, to whom he dispensed his bounty so as to afford a liberal increase to their creature comforts: he also inspected several of the grand sights in the metropolis, and then returned to Plymouth. Nothing could exceed the joyous glee of the subscribers to the address when, in public meeting assembled, Joe gave them an account of his mission; and when he announced that he was no longer plain Mister, but Sir Joseph Breeze, Knight, the building quivered with enthusiastic cheers, and my Lady Breeze was in the very height of her glory. Joe, according to what he conceived but a fair distribution of prize property, would willingly have shared half his knighthood with Lawyer Brief; but the thing was impracticable, and so he was compelled to bear it all himself, with his 'blushing honours thick about him.' Still, for a 'royal knight' (for so Joe styled himself) to remain landlord of a public-house seemed to be doing discredit to the favour of his sovereign, and the subject of removal was more strongly discussed than ever. Night after night the debate was renewed, till at last they actually left the business in the hands of a trusty agent, and started to take possession of a pretty little snug box in the country, a 'one-horse shay,' and dignity in retirement. At their time of life, however, new associations were out of the question; they tried to form acquaintance with the neighbouring gentry, but the aristocracy by descent looked upon them with contempt—the middle classes eyed them with envy—and the lower orders, missing the usual concomitants of gentility, indulged themselves in ridicule. Two or three times the 'one-horse shay' had capsized, which Joe attributed to being taken aback in sudden squalls, but, his spouse declared, was owing to his having pulled the wrong rein. The servants (in livery) were very different to the docile domestics at Plymouth; Joe sadly felt the loss of his old friends;—in short, the change was anything but satisfactory, and the expiration of a month found Sir Joseph re-established in the great room at the Roaring Boreas, and Lady Breeze once more officiating in her handsome and comfortable bar, to the great delight of the honest tars, who prided themselves mightily on the veteran's title, his call, and his pigtail.

Age and infirmity had compelled Captain Courtney to resign his command and take up his abode ashore; and our hero was appointed to a beautiful corvette, mounting twenty-two long eighteens, in which, according to the date of his commission, he found himself second-lieutenant: and, by a singular chain of circumstances, Parker shortly after joined as his junior—for the captain, enjoying post rank, had three lieutenants and a complement of one hundred and eighty men. She was, in truth, a lovely craft, of exquisite symmetry and admirable proportions—her tapering spars towering above one another in nearly a continuous line, and raking aft with graceful ease, her square yards that spread a broad clew to the breeze;—in short, she was just the creature to fascinate a seaman's eye and delight his heart.

Captain Rogerson was precisely the sort of man to command such a handsome craft as his Majesty's ship *Tulip*. He was extremely good-looking—fine, noble countenance—curly hair—in fact, not much unlike Sir Sydney Smith in person—a thorough seaman, and an officer of undoubted bravery; yet, with all these excellent qualities, Captain Rogerson was the most per-

feet and finished dandy that ever came from the neat cut of a tailor's sheers, or was hotpressed by his goose. Singularly compact in his own dress, he was studiously exact in his orders that the whole of his Tulips, both officers and men, should follow his example. Those who had whiskers trimmed them to a set pattern on the captain's countenance ; and every morning watch, at seven bells, the fashion of the day was announced from the quarter-deck by the rig in which the skipper appeared, exactly to the moment when the glass was turned, and the sonorous herald of time gave notice that Captain Rogerson expected to meet all his officers on the appointed station of honour. Nor was this a mere meeting of formality, for habit rendered it one of cordial greeting ; and the commander conversed as familiarly with his youngest midshipman as he did with his senior lieutenant : nor were the warrant-officers slighted, for the gunner, boatswain, and carpenter, were always expected to attend the 'levée,' and constantly received a fair share of attention. No levity was allowed—indeed, the slightest approach to playfulness was instantly checked—the bounds of decorum were never passed—or if now and then the peculiar watchfulness of the chief slumbered, and the junior department felt an inclination to sport the monkey, Captain Rogerson seemed to be possessed of an intuitive manner of restoring respect to himself and the sacred character of the quarter-deck.

It must be admitted, however, that the fashions were at some periods strangely capricious. For instance, in a heavy gale of wind, when the green seas were tossing the craft about like an empty bottle well corked, the captain would appear in white kerseymere knee-breeches and silk-stockings, a full uniform gold-laced coat, and cocked-hat splendidly bound, with the glittering band three fingers broad ; at other times, in fine weather, thick Flushing trousers, and a pea-jacket, with a hairy cap, would form the costume for the day : so that, in the first instance, had they been boarded by a stranger, he would naturally have supposed that they had put to sea from a ball-room in a hurry ; and in the latter, that they had suddenly and unexpectedly run out of a storm without having had an opportunity for changing their nor'-westers. The old master and the boatswain were exceptions : all the coaxing—all the teasing—all the threats of court-martials could not persuade them that 'one rig worn't as good as another ;' and the mistakes and shifts they were constantly making were ludicrous in the extreme, especially when the captain took it into his head to appear in buckskin breeches and top-boots with spurs.

Such was the droll compound under whom our hero was now to sail: but both he and Parker had been accustomed to eccentricities in Yorick, though of a totally different character ; and therefore, falling into the humour of their young chief (for he was only three-and-twenty), they were happy as messmates and friends. The seamen were all picked men ; for Rogerson spared neither money nor exertions to obtain thorough tars, and, being wealthy and of an influential family, his wishes were generally acceded to by the commander-in-chief. His own boat's crew were perfect models ; and perhaps England could not produce seven finer looking fellows, not one of them, except the coxswain, being older than their commander, for whom they felt an enthusiastic devotion bordering upon worship. Variable as Rogerson was in his own habiliments, he was still more so in the costume of his boat's crew : they had all colours ; and it was not unusual, when halfway between the ship and the shore, to make an entire cast of their clothing, and show off in something new. When the humour prevailed, they were dressed in tiger-skins, the oars were laid in, and short paddles substituted, which were used in the same manner as Indians in a canoe ; but his favourite suit was one that as nearly as possible corresponded with the flower after which the corvette was named, and each of them had an imitation tulip reversed for a cap, with a long stalk sticking out at top.

For these and other humours, some of the old captains looked upon him with contempt ; whilst many who affected to despise, still made attempts to copy the example, and that which was really natural in Rogerson became superlatively ridiculous in his imitators. His education had been strictly nautical—he loved the sea; but Nature had been bountiful to him in all her gifts—his memory was excellent, and he stored his mind with the choicest readings from the best authors, and, when he chose, his conversation was brilliant and delightful. As he was afloat, so he was ashore : if he rode in a close carriage, he constantly drove four horses ; but instead of these animals being two abreast, he would have them placed one before the other, that they might, as Jack said, 'sail ship-shape, and not like sodgers a-marching.' This would have been a difficult and hazardous arrangement; but he had cautiously put his boat's crew in regular training, and each mounted a horse, so that he had no less than four postilions. Tandem-driving, however, was his favourite amusement ; and not unfrequently he would have three horses in a line, with a man on each side of the fore horse's head, 'to flatter in forud when they luffed up into the wind, or wouldn't answer the helm.'

Captain Rogerson gave splendid dinners ; when in port and at sea, his table always presented some delicacy or other, with the best wines that could be procured : he was generous to a fault, and, independent of the strictness with which he preserved discipline, was humane. In his punishments, however, he was extremely severe : but it was seldom that he had occasion, except now and then on a Sunday, to read any of the articles of war, and the cats with their numerous tails quietly slumbered in the boatswain's store-room.

The ship was all a-taunto at Spithead waiting for orders, when Captain Rogerson, walking the quarter-deck with his second lieutenant, thus addressed him : 'Were you ever—aw—upon

the Wight—aw?—beautiful place—delightful ride. Should you—aw—like—aw—to join me in a trip?'

'It will afford me great pleasure, sir,' returned our hero, bowing. 'I have landed on the island, but was never in the interior; though I have heard its scenery and fertility much praised.'

'You—aw—shall have ocular demonstration, Mr. Courtney,' returned Rogerson stiffly. 'Mr. Parker!—aw—aw—have the goodness—aw—to man my boat.'

'Ay, ay, sir,' returned Parker, as he turned to issue the necessary order to the midshipman, who called to the boatswain's mate, who chirped upon his call and shouted, 'Tulips, away!'

In less than two minutes the boat was alongside, and before five minutes had expired,—the men in sea-green frocks and trousers—the officers in undress uniform,—had shoved off from the ship: the wind was fair—the sail was hoisted, and away they bounded over the waters like a bird upon the wing. At Ryde they procured horses, and were soon in the midst of green fields and ripening grain, for it was the very height of summer; and Ten-thousand enjoyed all those delicious sensations which had been so precious and delightful to him in the days of his boyhood. Nor was Rogerson backward in acknowledging the influence and power of Nature: his language became divested of the ordinary foppery—he was animated, entertaining, and manifested a knowledge of the picturesque which our hero would not without evidence have given him credit for. At Newport they 'hove-to' for a short time, and then pursued their way across the island.

Ten-thousand imagined they had landed for the pleasure of a ride; yet affection reminded him that somewhere in the neighbourhood they should probably visit, stood the place in which Miss Waldegrave had passed the years of infancy, and he felt a strong desire to visit it; but he would not press his own gratification upon his commander, nor would he mention it at all, lest, being unwilling to enter into particulars, he should subsequently be discovered, and his conduct be liable to suspicion for duplicity. He had on several occasions heard from Caroline, whose attachment appeared by her letters to remain unchanged, and he had written in reply; but, as has been before stated, his correspondence was intercepted, and, much as an interview was ardently desired, she had requested him not to come to Devonshire till he received further directions from herself.

The two officers at length put up their horses at a village ale-house, and walked down to the romantic bay that forms one of the lions of the Isle of Wight, and which was, in fact, the one containing the solitary residence of the anchorite. Caroline had well described the spot to Ten-thousand, and his vivid fancy immediately recalled the scenery to mind, so that he had no doubt upon the subject. The dwelling of the recluse had also been minutely delineated in a drawing which our hero had copied, and his eye readily discovered the exact spot. He proposed ascending the craggy steps; but Rogerson excused himself, at the same time requesting his lieutenant to follow the bent of his inclination, and he would rejoin him in about an hour's time.

The earnest wish to hear some intelligence of the Wentworth family overcame every other feeling, and Ten-thousand was soon on the flat in front of the cavern, whilst his captain strolled carelessly away and was shortly concealed from view. A few gentle knocks at the door brought out the recluse; and our hero, after suitable apologies, frankly told the object of his visit. The aged anchorite listened with earnest attention, and after a moderate lecture on the vanity and frailty of human endearments, he questioned Ten-thousand as to his present condition as well as his future prospects, and met with the most unreserved and candid answers—in fact, the young seaman narrated particulars from the hour of his being saved by the worthy coxswain of the *Alfred's* barge.

Varied emotions agitated the anchorite as the tale proceeded, and at its close the venerable man congratulated his companion on the success he had experienced; but he was by no means communicative of information relative to the only object that engrossed the young man's thoughts—and though he did not actually condemn the attachment, yet he certainly discouraged it as teeming with misery to both. The lieutenant talked of his expectancies from Captain Courtney, whose wealth was ample, and also of his determination to use his best endeavours to rise in the service so as to place Miss Waldegrave, should her fortune be sacrificed, in that station of society she was so well adapted to fill.

There was an eloquence in his language, and a plain, honest sincerity in his ardour, that could not fail to make a suitable impression on the individual whom he addressed. The recluse, however, combated his arguments with subtlety—closely interrogated him on many points which showed that he already possessed some knowledge of their mutual regard, and then informed him that the Wentworth family, including Caroline, were at that moment stopping at the cottage for a few summer weeks, having arrived from Devonshire two or three days before. Contrary to the persuasions of the recluse, our hero determined to proceed towards the grounds, under the hope of obtaining at least a sight of her whom he so affectionately loved, and, if possible, of enjoying an interview.

The young lieutenant descended the cliff, and was rapidly traversing the beach, entirely oblivious as it respected his commander, when suddenly turning the angle of a projecting rock, he beheld him at no great distance, in company with a female. An indescribable sensation crossed our hero's mind, a sort of presentiment of evil; and as they evidently had not seen him, he again stepped back into concealment. Rogerson and his fair companion advanced; they were in unreserved conversation. Ten-thousand could clearly distinguish their voices, and that of the lady resembled one that was well remembered

as having so delightfully thrilled upon his heart in happier moments: he peeped forth from his covert—he could not be deceived—the female leaning on the captain's arm was none other than Miss Waldegrave.

Oh, who can paint the racking, excruciating agony of the lieutenant's mind!—the ardent expectation he had so fervidly cherished was at once crushed and destroyed, and he took in at one hasty glance the certainty of misery where he had anticipated happiness. He had been delighted with his ship, and satisfied with his captain; yet he made no doubt that the latter was his rival, and that it would of course be necessary for him to quit the former. He also felt the awkwardness of his present position; for if he showed himself from among the rocks, it would be directly supposed that he had been watching them. He therefore retired as noiselessly as possible to a still greater distance; though he could not avoid hearing what they said as they passed onwards within a few paces of him towards the anchorite's cave.

'Nay, Adolphus,' uttered Caroline, with emphasis, 'you charge me unjustly: I have never ceased to value and esteem you as——' here the words became inaudible through the noise of the broken water on the shore.

'Then go with me to Spithead,' responded Rogerson: 'his lordship can make no objections. Prove that I am still the same to you! Miss Wentworth will bear you company; and —aw—if not, what prevents your coming alone to——'

Ten-thousand heard no more; but quite enough had come to his ears to make him superlatively wretched. 'Could the captain have been acquainted with his engagement to Caroline, or was the rencontre merely accidental?' were questions he repeatedly asked himself without arriving at any satisfactory conclusion. Not a single hint had passed between them that either was friendly with, or even knew the Wentworths; but it would appear to our hero's mind that his commander had a design in the course he had taken, though probably without being aware of his lieutenant's regard for Miss Waldegrave. At all events, in one thing he could not be mistaken: the familiarity which evidently existed between the parties could only have one origin—a mutual attachment. Yet how could he reconcile this idea with the assurances of unalterable esteem he had from time to time received under her own hand? and what was the Honourable Mr. Wentworth about, to permit a favoured lover to enjoy the society of his future bride? All was mystery, and the blow had come so heavily, so unexpectedly—even at the very instant when his heart was overflowing with tenderness and hope, that it crushed his reasoning faculties, and he saw nothing but the dark side of the picture. He watched their receding forms; but they did not ascend to the habitation of the recluse, where, however, Ten-thousand promptly returned as soon as he could effect his purpose without observation. Unhesitatingly he communicated what had occurred to the anchorite, and, in the depth of his despair, would in all likelihood have committed some extravagance but for the soothing counsel of the aged man. He hastily wrote a few lines with his pencil on the blank leaf of his pocket-book, which he tore out and exhorted the hermit to deliver to Caroline. The recluse promised compliance, and gave the young man assurances that at length tranquillised his agony; so that by the time his captain's hail was heard from the rocks below, he was calm; but his calmness proceeded more from the death of hope than from any return of a happy spirit.

On emerging from the cavern, the recluse endeavoured to cheer him with words of comfort; but Ten-thousand expected to find Miss Waldegrave still with his commander, and he struggled against the sickly sensations which threatened to overpower him. Nerving himself for the interview, he looked over the precipice and saw that Rogerson was alone. A wild hysterical laugh burst from him that rung with strange echoes amongst the cliffs, and bidding the recluse farewell, he descended to his superior, whose gaiety seemed more enlarged and animated as they returned across the island. A tumultuous excitement strained our hero's faculties. Rogerson made no mention of the manner in which he had been engaged: Ten-thousand could not, and would not broach the subject; he therefore called all his energies into action, and talked and laughed immoderately; and the two officers, unrestrained by the discipline of the ship, gave full scope to their vivid imaginations in all the brilliancy of good education enlivened by sallies of wit and humour. The lieutenant laboured under a species of delirium something like that which is occasioned by swallowing laudanum, and he foolishly fancied that he had overcome his affection for Miss Waldegrave, and had relapsed into indifference. His captain was surprised and not a little gratified with the extent of his information, and the very gentlemanly manner in which he conducted himself: he knew him only as Edward Courtney, the son of one of England's bravest chiefs, for Ten-thousand's history, although known to Parker, had not been communicated to anyone in the corvette.

The boat was waiting for them at Ryde: Captain Rogerson returned to his old habits, and a respectful distance was rigidly exacted and as strictly observed. During their absence, a telegraphic despatch had come down, ordering the immediate departure of the *Tulip* for the Mediterranean; and the commander, after putting the lieutenant on board, pulled over to Portsmouth to attend upon the admiral.

Parker instantly detected the alteration in the manner of his friend; there was an unusual redness of the eyes, and symptoms of petulance which were rapidly succeeded by unnatural attempts at mirth. The surgeon also observed it, and his professional knowledge speedily ascertained that the young man was in a high fever. With much difficulty he was persuaded to retire to his cabin, and a composing draught was administered; but it was long before overwrought

nature yielded to its power, and during the interval the agitation and distress of our hero were terrible: he was perfectly sensible, and in the stillness of retirement his thoughts reverted to the events of the day. To endure such torment much longer seemed to be impossible, and he formed a determination to apply to be superseded, to have one last interview with Miss Waldegrave, and then——but all the rest was blank.

At length he sank into a restless slumber, disturbed by harassing dreams, from which he awoke unrefreshed to find the ship under way and running through the Needles' passage with a brisk breeze.

CHAPTER XVII.

'Hail to the flag, the gallant flag, in battle or in blast,
Whether 'tis hoisted at the peak, or nail'd to splinter'd mast!
Though rent by service or by shot, all tatter'd it may be,
Old England's tars shall still maintain its dread supremacy.'

Bentley's Miscellany.

It was several days before Ten-thousand was enabled to return to his duty, and the interval was passed in painful ruminations that were calculated to retard recovery. Captain Rogerson's kindness and attention were unlimited, but they served to heighten rather than diminish the lieutenant's distress. Sometimes he felt inclined to unfold the secrets of his heart to his generous commander, and thereby come to a proper explanation; but the delicacy of his situation restrained him, and he feared to encounter ridicule, if not resentment, from one whom, in spite of all drawbacks, he could not but esteem. As he gradually recovered from his attack of indisposition, so the desire for concealment increased, and at length he resolved to bury the whole transaction in his own breast, leaving it to time and circumstances to develop the seeming mystery; but he was not now, as heretofore, one of the foremost in promoting conviviality, and the most assiduous in the performance of his duties; the incentive to exertion seemed to be paralysed—the motive for strenuous action subdued, if not wholly lost: none knew the cause, though all mourned the consequences.

A beautiful and delightful station was the Mediterranean at that season of the year, when Nature lavished her smiles upon the face of creation, and the rising sun, like a mighty conqueror, came with his host of light to claim his throne, and then, after the glorious toils of the day, retired from the well-won field in gorgeous splendour to assume dominion over the whole world. But it was in the twilight hour that the tranquillising influences of the summer evening were fully felt—when the balmy breeze from the shores of luxuriant Italy cooled its delicious fragrance on the bosom of the deep, and came with sweet freshness to the invalid. It was then that the *Tulip's* second-lieutenant experienced a soothing to his sorrows; and though the weight of disappointed affection pressed heavy upon his spirits, yet HE who made all things by the word of his power ordained that his creation should take precedence of every thought in the mind of man, so that every affection should yield to a pleasing contemplation of the beauteous wonders he has formed.

The corvette seemed exactly the sort of mystic craft adapted to those sunny waters; and her young commander exulted in the pride of his heart when he beheld the shadow of her fair proportions thrown by the moon on the smooth surface of the sea, whilst her slumbering sails were silently filled by the breath of heaven, and she moved through the yielding element like a thing of life. Few persons can form an adequate idea of the attachment which a seaman cherishes for his ship: she becomes his darling, his boast, his delight, and he loves to see her boldly breasting the surges, dashing the spray from her bows, and clearing her way with something like human energy. The Tulips almost worshipped their gallant sea-boat, and longed for some opportunity to offer that might immortalise her name in the annals of naval history.

And stirring service *was* at hand; for, after some weeks' cruising off Sicily, they were ordered to Aboukir Bay, and soon afterwards joined the flotilla for the reduction of Alexandria, where General Menou still held out, nor would accept of the convention granted to the French army that surrendered at Cairo. General Hutchinson commanded the land forces, Rear-admiral Sir Richard Bickerton the naval armament; and braver fellows never before screwed bayonet on a musket, or rammed home an eighteen-pounder.

It is not necessary to recapitulate the whole of the proceedings from the time of landing the troops till the evacuation of Alexandria by the enemy—they are matters of general history, and therefore may be perused in other works; whilst individual gallantry is seldom noticed in public despatches, and therefore become exclusively the property of the biographer. The Royal Navy of England has at all times been celebrated for the daring exploits of those intrepid men who never thought of defeat, but nobly sustained the honour of the flag: whether it floated at the gaff end, was hoisted on a staff within a battery, or waved before them as they marched (the most difficult task of all to a seaman) to meet the foe on hard ground—wherever or however displayed, they made it the standard of victory. Of these, none were more worthy of being celebrated than the naval heroes of Egypt, from the battle of the Nile to the period when the tri-colour was driven from the shores it had invaded.

It was impossible for the young lieutenant to witness the bold exploits that were every hour presented without feeling his energies revive: the love of country—attachment to his profession—his character as an officer, aroused him from his lethargy; and though he was no longer the cheerful companion or the social messmate, yet he became more animated than ever in the discharge of his duties, and there was a coolness and determination in his bravery that rendered

him the admiration of his brother officers and the pride of the honest tars.

There is perhaps no place in the world similarly situated with Alexandria, standing, as it does, on an artificial neck of land which unites the continent to what was formerly an island, but now constitutes the peninsula of Pharos. It is nearly surrounded with water, having Lake Mareotis on the south side, divided from the sea by a narrow causeway; the ocean on the north-east and south-west washing its very base, whilst a small promontory defends it from the Mediterranean on the north-west. Thus it would be almost impregnable if well fortified, and with a perfect command on the waters. But this latter was not the case with the French, for the British flag reigned triumphant, and

'Britannia ruled the waves.'

Our hero was appointed to command a division of armed launches from the fleet, destined to co-operate with the land forces under Major-general Coote against the town of Marabout, situated some seven or eight miles to the westward of Alexandria, and protecting the western side of the harbour. It was on the morning of the 21st of August they boldly advanced to the attack; the outposts were driven in, the enemy retired, and, after a brave defence, the town surrendered in the evening. The flotilla anchored to preserve the station they had gained, and be prepared for a still more arduous undertaking on the morrow. A higher rank took command—the gallant Sir Sidney Smith—and hearts beat high for death or glory.

Ten-thousand was greatly attached to reminiscences of the olden time; and he loved to peruse the records of early history, so as to engage his mind in ruminations of the past. At the moment of being ordered away, he had been reading the account of Alexandria by Diodorus, and he had almost unconsciously slipped the book into his pocket and taken it with him. Now, those who have visited that part of the Mediterranean shores and professed a desire for research cannot have failed to have had their minds excited by remembrances of its former splendour, when it was said to rival Rome in its dimensions, and was considered the first commercial city of the old world.

It was a beautiful evening: there was the bustle of preparation in the fleet, particularly amongst the British sloops of war and the Turkish corvettes, whilst on the east side of Alexandria a brisk cannonade was kept up, and in Marabout the troops were reposing on their laurels. Our hero, seated in the stern of his boat, took out the volume to beguile the time, and to drive away thoughts that frequently embittered his existence. Often, as he read, he suddenly stopped, and raising his glass, directed it to different objects on the shore, particularly towards the obelisks that showed themselves towering above the town. The boat's crew carefully noted his actions; and as hard fighting had somewhat relaxed discipline, the coxswain, respectfully touching his hat, 'made bould to ax Mr. Courtney if so be he had got all the bearings and distances logg'd down in his book, and which on 'em was Clipsypartree's darning-needle.'

The lieutenant smiled; but he was at all times too good-humoured and communicative to deny an answer to anyone who desired information. 'This,' said he, 'is a description of what Alexandria was, not what it is now; for it has undergone many revolutions since Diodorus wrote.'

'Mayhap so, sir, returned the coxswain; 'and I'm thinking it will have another heavylution afore this time to-morrow. I suppose Muster Diddleus was the Hamilton Moore of his time, and worked the traverses for them as comed arter him. It 'll be an ould place then, sir, and not much good to be got out on it?'

'It is very ancient, coxswain,' replied the officer, 'and was founded by Alexander the Great. Mr. Diddleus, as you call him, says that in his time the city contained three hundred thousand freemen: but that glory has departed, and only a small portion remains to show what its splendour must have been. Alexander was buried here.'

'Was he an admiral, sir?' inquired the coxswain, who believed no one to be greater except the King and Billy Pitt.

'No; he was a monarch,' answered the lieutenant; 'and I was just reading about his funeral. The corpse was placed in a coffin of beaten gold, wrought in the form and exact proportions of the body; every vacant space was filled with the choicest aromatic spices, and a cover of gold was clapped on over all.'

'By the tropics of war! Mr. Courtney, but I should like to overhaul that same coffin for my share of prize-money!' said the coxswain.

'—It was placed on a chariot under a triumphal arch of gold,' continued the lieutenant; 'which arch was adorned with costly precious stones, and supported by pillars of gold, after the *Ionic* order——'

'I ax pardon, sir, for interrupting,' exclaimed the coxswain; 'but I'm thinking that *Old-Nick* order must have been a *devilish* queer one, anyhow, for a man to be hove overboard with.'

The lieutenant laughed, and, knowing the utter inutility of explanation, proceeded—'On each side of the arch was placed a golden image of Victory——'

'Ah, now there's some sense in that!' observed the coxswain; 'and so ought the figure-head of the ould ship to be carved in gould—that ud be doing things somut ship-shape.'

'But the expense, my man, and the danger of losing it!' said the lieutenant: 'besides, good timber is at times more valuable than the precious metal.—But, to go on——was a golden image of Victory bearing a laurel. On the top was a gold fringe or network, from which hung golden bells, which were so large that they might be heard at a considerable distance.'

'I'm bless'd but them bells would have done nicely to have got some gould *rings* out on!' remarked the coxswain, unknowingly giving utterance to a pun.

'Under this arch,' continued our hero, 'was

erected a throne of gold adorned with little coronets of various beautiful colours; and at the entrance to the arch were golden lions looking very fiercely. On the top of the arch, in the middle of the front, was a purple carpet, bearing a crown of gold so large that, by the reflection of the sunbeams, it darted such amazing splendour and brightness as at a distance resembled a flash of lightning. The whole was set upon two axletrees, the ends of which were also of gold, representing lions' heads with darts in their jaws; it was borne along upon four wheels covered with gold, and was drawn by sixty-four of the largest and finest mules that could be procured, each mule having a crown of gold upon its head, and golden bells on both sides of the neck, the collars being beautified with precious stones.'

'Do you think the enemy has got hould of any on 'em, Mr. Courtney?' inquired the coxswain. 'Well, I'm blow'd but I should like to get that 'ere crown that shined like a dollar, just for a present to his Majesty, God bless him! I shouldn't wonder but he'd order me a bottle o' rum for it.'

'This was also the burial-place of Ptolemy,' said the lieutenant; 'and his tomb was made of gold.'

'It's a doorable article, sir, is gould,' said the coxswain; 'and if I get four-and-twenty hours' leave, and can steer clear of the grog-shop, maybe I won't be having a overhaul arter Mr. Dollyme's monyment!'

'How are you, Courtney?—eh! haw!—better?' shouted Captain Rogerson, rowing up in his boat. 'Splendid day to-morrow—the—haw—admiral—haw—means to send a party of hands—haw—to reeve his best bower cable through the eye of Cleopatra's Needle.'

The seamen pricked up their ears and religiously believed it, each longing to have a finger in the fun; and the coxswain whispered, 'Why, what the —— is the ould boy going to be at now?—that needle would have made a mainsel for Noah's ark.'

'I am bound ashore, Courtney,' said the captain, who appeared to have studiously attended to his toilet, as his full-dress uniform plainly evinced; 'there's to be a little battery-work this evening, and—haw—

'Will you go see the order of the course?'

Our hero would have willingly complied; but at that moment a lieutenant from the flag-ship brought instructions for the division of boats under his command to attack a French frigate that lay outside the other shipping, and, if practicable, to board and secure her, so as to produce a diversion, whilst a bombardment was carried on to the eastward. The flotilla was speedily in motion, and, amidst a shower of shot and shells, succeeded in getting alongside. Then commenced the hand-to-hand encounter. The bold British tars clambered up the best way they were able, but were hurled back again maimed and wounded—some falling overboard to rise no more, others destitute of life before they fell. Yet, with undaunted courage, fresh numbers tried to board; and the assailants increasing every minute, the crew of the frigate were too much dispersed to become properly effective in defence. The forecastle was gained by the young lieutenant and his men, who ascended by the foretack bumkin and headrails; a desperate rush was made along the starboard gangway, and the enemy retreating to rally on the quarter-deck, the side was left unguarded, and in an instant the boarding party threw themselves one after the other, many of them headlong over the waist hammock nettings to join their intrepid comrades. Amongst them appeared Captain Rogerson; yet the figure he cut was so extremely ludicrous, that, but for the stains of blood upon his white waistcoat, it would have been impossible to refrain from a hearty laugh at his expense. The fact was, instead of going on shore, he had followed, *con amore*, either to witness or join in the affray; and finding that the enemy made a most determined resistance, he preferred the latter, and in endeavouring to ascend the fore chains, his white kerseymere tights were rent from clew to earring, or, in other words, were split from flap to waistband. Up however he went, but was knocked backwards by an awkward blow that flattened in his gold-laced cocked hat; and he would have gone overboard, had not a seaman caught him by the tails of his full-dress uniform coat, which yielding to the weight of the wearer, gave way behind right up to the collar, so as to leave one half attached to one arm and the other half attached to the other arm: but still he would not divest himself of what had now become an encumbrance.

On the quarter-deck of the frigate stood her commander, with his surviving officers and people pouring in a destructive fire on the boarders. Captain Rogerson, one flap of his cocked hat hanging down over his back like a coalheaver's, waved his gold-hilted sword above his head and shouted, 'D—— your bloods! make a lane there!' and dashed impetuously on the Frenchmen. Courtney was at his side, and the bold tars promptly followed; but the phalanx did not give way, and the British were driven back. For an instant the two chiefs eyed one another, and each by the flourish of his weapon seemed desirous of a personal encounter. The firing never ceased for an instant; for the marines had made good their footing, and were going through their clockwork evolutions with coolness and precision, whilst the enemy were equally destructive though not quite so formal. Rogerson cut a cross with the point of his sword upon the deck, and looked defiance at the French captain, who returned the salute as accepting the challenge. They advanced towards each other almost by a simultaneous spring, when Rogerson, his eye keenly fixed upon his antagonist, suddenly tucked his sword under his arm, and pulling out a splendid gold snuff-box from his waistcoat pocket, with the utmost politeness of manner, as if he had been in a convivial party, knocked up the lid, and presented

it to the astonished Frenchman. 'Un petit—aw—prise de tabac, monsieur?' exclaimed he, with matchless coolness and effrontery; 'and then—aw—hold your own.'

The act seemed to stagger the captain of the frigate; but at that instant another officer of similar rank sprang forward and made a pass at Rogerson, which would probably have proved fatal to him, but for the clever fence of our hero, who parried it with skill and returned it with unerring effect. This was the signal for a renewal of attack, and desperate grew the spectacle of slaughter: but at length British valour triumphed, and the enemy cried for quarter.

The lieutenant was running aft to haul down the colours, when his haste was arrested by perceiving the officer he had wounded leaning against one of the quarter-deck guns in a state of great exhaustion. During the encounter he had not observed the features of his countenance; but now he instantly recognised them—they were too deeply impressed upon his memory to be forgotten; it was Dubois. An instinctive shudder crept over the heart of the young man—the colours were no longer thought of, but Ten-thousand lost not a moment in addressing the traitor, who was too seriously hurt to get away.

'I am in your power, sir,' said Dubois, speaking in French; 'you were once in mine and I was merciful,—act with similar mercy towards me.'

'You are a traitor and a murderer!' exclaimed Ten-thousand; 'do you think I have forgotten your treachery at Herr Vonestracht's?'

'I might retort,' said Dubois; 'I might ask who assassinated Tiercelin; but all that would avail me nothing! I am bleeding to death—my hours are numbered! Oh, God! there is a heavy weight upon my soul, and yet I would not die dishonoured; conceal your knowledge of me, monsieur—it is the solemn request of one who will soon cease to breathe.'

'I cannot swerve from my duty,' responded the lieutenant, somewhat touched by his supplications and wounded condition; 'I must make my report with fidelity.'

'Be it so,' returned Dubois, as he clenched his teeth together; 'but hear me, young man, and mark my words; come closer, for I am growing faint. I feel that life is ebbing fast, and I cannot long survive; spare your report, then, until I am no more. Promise me that—only that.'

'You may not be so dangerously or mortally hurt as you imagine,' said our hero; 'therefore recovery is not improbable. How then would such a promise stand in accordance with my honour?'

'No, no,' replied Dubois; 'recovery is out of the question. Entertain but one hope of it—cherish the thought in your heart, and I am safe. Here, young man, here—closer yet, for there are listeners by, and my communication must meet no other ears than yours.'

Our hero approached close to the wounded officer, and a whispering conversation of a few minutes ensued. At its close the face of Ten-thousand was ashy pale—he trembled in every joint—he staggered from his position, and would have fallen but for the instant aid of the coxswain, who, advancing to obtain orders, was just in time to render support to the lieutenant. 'It cannot be!' exclaimed the latter, as his faculties rallied to restoration—'it is impossible! And yet there are facts. Oh, God! this is indeed a trial! Suppose it true——' He ruminated a minute, and then added, 'Coxswain, convey this officer to the cabin. And,' addressing a young midshipman who was much attached to him, 'Penrose, bear a hand; lose not an instant in finding a surgeon. But, avast! here is Murray himself.' Murray, the assistant surgeon of the *Tulip*, approached. 'For the love of God, Murray, and by every feeling of friendship you may cherish for me, let me beg of you to see to the wounds of this officer directly. Do not stop to inquire the cause of my agitation, but again I entreat you to comply with my request.'

Supported by the coxswain and young Penrose, Capitaine-de-frégate Dubois descended to the cabin, attended by Murray, who carefully examined and dressed his wounds, which though extremely severe, were none of them mortal. The frigate had been towed out by the boats, and having been supplied with additional hands, now pointed her guns upon the vessels in the harbour. Captain Rogerson had returned to the corvette with a few slight scratches, and his dress being somewhat decently adjusted, he proceeded to the flag-ship. Murray sought our hero (who had resigned his command to a superior officer) and informed him of the state in which Dubois really was.

'Is he aware that his wounds are not mortal?' inquired the lieutenant, eagerly; 'have you told him there is hope?'

'No,' replied Murray; 'he is nearly insensible; but there certainly is no immediate danger: he must not, however, be disturbed.'

Ten-thousand appeared to be greatly agitated, indeed almost convulsed. 'Do not let him know it; but, Murray, if you prize me as a friend—if you value the future happiness of a fellow-creature, try and save him. I must see him, speak to him; for if he dies insensible—oh, God!——' and he hurriedly paced the deck.

'He will be sent to the hospital, Mr. Courtney, unless you could get him removed to the corvette,' said the assistant surgeon. 'His wounds will require some pretty practice, and I should like very much to—— You understand me.'

'I do, Murray,' responded the lieutenant, who conjectured that his professional friend wished to try his skill on the Anglo-Frenchman. 'He shall have my cabin if it can be accomplished. But is he in a fit state to be removed?'

'Certainly not at this present period,' replied the assistant surgeon; 'but there is no fear of his getting away—he is safe enough where he is.'

At this moment our hero received orders to collect his men and take his station on the flank of the troops that were drawn out under Major-

general Coote on the narrow isthmus leading to the town. It had long been dark, but there was no difficulty in executing the command, and placing himself in the flotilla under Captain Cochrane, they eagerly awaited daylight. At the first dawn the whole were in motion,—post after post was carried, the enemy retreating in the greatest confusion, leaving behind them their cannon and wounded. For four successive days there was nothing but downright hard fighting; the blockade of the town was fully completed, four batteries were opened on each side of it, and on the morning of the 27th, General Menou requested an armistice of three days to prepare a capitulation. This was granted, and hostilities ceased.

The first opportunity that offered, our hero boarded the French frigate, his mind eagerly hoping to solve the mystery which hung over him; for that Dubois was acquainted with important transactions relative to his birth and being so cruelly abandoned in his infancy, he entertained no doubt;—in fact, the private whispering had revealed a circumstance to him that filled his heart with anguish and dismay. He hastily ran below to the cabin, his cheeks flushed, his breath quick, his pulse quivering;—a few minutes would probably explain all that he ardently longed to know. He entered—but Dubois was gone, and the only account that could be given of him rested on the supposition that he had plunged overboard from the cabin-window during an attack of delirium and was drowned.

To describe the state of the lieutenant's mind would be impossible, nor shall I attempt it. He returned to his ship almost distracted; for in his secret communication with Dubois the traitor had declared himself our hero's father. But cooler reflection brought with it greater composure. If it was indeed the fact, then he had been spared the painful task of impeaching a parent, and the secret of his disgraceful connection remained concealed within his own breast. Yet he recollected the intimacy that existed between Dubois and Acheson, and the effect which had been produced on Aunt Alicia by the mention of his name: the whole was a mystery which now, he feared, would never be solved. He called to memory also that his own hand had inflicted one wound amongst the many he had received; though the relationship was then unknown to him, and it was in the performance of his duty that it had been given.

The boatswain's-mate's shrill pipe aroused him from his painful and perplexing embarrassment;—he listened, and the hoarse voice resounded down the hatchways, 'Up anchor ahoy!'—The *Tulip* was bound to sea immediately. That night they were many leagues from land, and daylight the next morning gave a clear horizon all around them. About four bells in the forenoon watch, 'Sail-o!' was shouted from the look-out aloft, and a few minutes sufficed to ascertain that it was a ship of warlike appearance standing nearly across the corvette's fore-foot. Chase was immediately given—the stranger continued his course, and the two ships rapidly neared each other till their hulls were visible from the deck of each.

The *official* rig for the day, amongst the officers, was a pea-jacket with the uniform button, a leathern cap, canvas knee-breeches, and top-boots; and it was in this costume, under a warm sun, that Captain Rogerson stood upon the top-gallant forecastle of his beautiful vessel attentively examining the stranger through his glass. She had already been pronounced a frigate; but of what nation, except that she certainly was not English, there remained considerable doubt. At a signal-distance the colours were hoisted; but the frigate took no notice, except to edge more away and set her studding-sails. The corvette, however, came up with her hand-over-hand, and there could be no doubt that a couple of hours more would attest the national character of the chase. The *Tulip's* company were ordered aft, and they speedily mustered on the quarter-deck.

'My brave Tulips!' said their young commander, addressing them, 'I have every reason to believe that you have now a glorious opportunity of capturing an enemy's ship of greatly superior force. Be cool, and don't throw a single shot away. And, boarders, if you are wanted, I shall lead you myself! Have your ports ready for unshipping in an instant; but wait for the word. Double-shot the guns: and, first captains, make sure of your mark before you fire.—To quarters!'

This was uttered by the captain without one particle of his usual affectation, and in a few minutes the guns were cast loose, the lanyards of the half-ports singled, and every man stood ready at his post. The officers with their glasses keenly watched the motions of the stranger, who, as soon as there was a prospect of their telling, discharged her stern-guns, but without showing any ensign. The *Tulip* gallantly pursued her way unharmed, the men longing to return the fire, and excited to impatience as they heard the whistling of the messengers that flew over or close to them. The captain observed it,—'Pink shirts and tulip caps!' shouted he; and in an instant every man ran below; and in three minutes they were again at their guns equipped according to orders. Not a single flash of powder had as yet manifested any signs of armament on board the corvette: her people crouched down at their quarters, and not a creature was visible except the commander and his first-lieutenant.

As they closed with the frigate, however, her fire was better directed; a fact which was evidenced by the crashing of spars and the rending sails. Still the *Tulip* made no return; nor were they aware to what nation the enemy belonged.

'There are turbans on board,' said Captain Rogerson when within half-pistol shot. 'She's no Frenchman, that's certain; and if a Turk, she takes us for French, despite our ensign.—Steer steady, my lad, and keep a little open of his weather-quarter. We'll try what he's made of presently. Go it, my *Tulip!*—steady so!—Marines and small-arm-men send a volley into

her stern, and just astonish their weak minds!'

The volley was fired: the frigate gave a broad yaw to leeward; but not a broadside gun was discharged, though there would have been a favourable opportunity. 'You have hit the helmsman,' said the first lieutenant; 'they'll want a fresh hand at the wheel. Another volley or two will keep the fellows at those stern-chasers in check.'

They were rapidly nearing the enemy, who still kept up their fire, when a shot struck the first-lieutenant, shattered his arm close up to the shoulder, and laid him prostrate on the deck. A deep flush of anger spread over the fine features of Captain Rogerson as he raised the poor fellow up, and, calling to four of the seamen, directed them to carry the officer below. 'The rascals shall pay dearly for that!' exclaimed the captain; and springing on the taffrail, he stood sternly gazing at the enemy.

The ships were running with the wind about a point abaft the beam, the larboard-side being the weather-side. The *Tulip's* musketry played upon the frigate till the former had got well upon her quarter, when the word was given, 'Up with the helm!—in ports!—out guns!—and, d—n 'em, physic 'em!'

The manœuvre was well performed: the corvette, obedient to the rudder, fell off in admirable style; she passed within ten yards of her opponent's stern, and crash! crash! crash! went every double-shot slap into her, knocking the windows into one mass of ruin, and ploughing up the decks as they rattled fore and aft. Then arose loud shrieks, which were distinctly heard as the corvette ranged to leeward and a feeble fire from the frigate's starboard guns was returned. The fact was, that, seeing the *Tulip*, as they thought, trying for the weather-gauge, the larboard guns alone had been attended to; and when, having given them a terrible raking, the corvette ran under their lee, they were unprepared for defence. Another broadside was poured in by the Tulips as she walked past her opponent; and then, luffing across her bows, they again raked her as they passed her fore-foot, though at greater distance than before. The frigate bore up dead before it, and the corvette did the same, which brought them abeam of each other, and for ten minutes a heavy fire was kept up on both sides; but the *Tulip*, having the superiority of sailing, again crossed the frigate's bows, and raked her with deadly effect. Turbans were seen waving; the enemy's guns were silent; the sails were let go by the run, in token of surrender; and it was not till then that the people of the frigate seemed to be sensible that they had no colours flying which it was possible to strike. Captain Rogerson took no notice of this; he treated them to another broadside, when up went a bright red flag with a Moor's head on the field; it floated a few minutes at the peak, and was then hauled down.

'An Algerine, by all that's abominable!' exclaimed Captain Rogerson. 'Some of them shall try the yard-rope if I live another hour. Out boats, Mr. Courtney, and take possession of the prize. But those fellows are not to be trusted; you must go well manned and armed!'

The small cutter was lowered down, and the large cutter was hanging in the stay-tackles, when the treacherous Algerine passed under the corvette's stern, and, notwithstanding she had struck, again renewed her fire. Courtney was forward at the time, but he instantly ran aft—Captain Rogerson staggered towards him, and fell mortally wounded into the lieutenant's arms. To convey their revered commander below and to reopen their fire was but the work of a few minutes; and our hero found himself unexpectedly and unwished-for the responsible commandant of the corvette. 'Now, Parker,' said he to his junior, 'we have it to ourselves. Well behaved, my lads! make every shot tell who sent it!'

But the Algerines again gave evidences of surrender—the large red flag with the Moor's head was once more hoisted and hauled down; still the lieutenant was doubtful of their keeping good faith; he, therefore, ran the frigate aboard, and with a party of daring fellows rushed on the frigate's decks. They met with no resistance: the treacherous villains had gone below to hide themselves. Courtney returned to the corvette, and the ships swung clear.

By some unaccountable circumstance, the only British officer left in the Algerine was a young midshipman who had barely seen his twelfth year; it had been probably owing to the confusion incident on the separation of the vessels that this had taken place; but the moment Courtney was aware of it, he directed Parker to take the small cutter and assume the command. The boat was hauled up alongside, the junior lieutenant was descending into it, when a wild shout arose from the frigate, for which there seemed to be no adequate cause. Courtney hastened to the gangway to hail, the men returned to their guns; but the whole was soon explained, when, suspended from the extremities of the main and fore-topmast studding-sail booms appeared the writhing bodies of the captain and second in command of the frigate. It was lawless justice—the lieutenant would have restrained it; but it was too late—the wretches hung convulsively hitching in their last death-throes, and were left a fearful spectacle of retribution. As soon as duty permitted, Ten-thousand visited the cabin, where his supposed rival, the handsome Rogerson, was stretched on his couch breathing the slow remains of life away: a grape-shot had nearly torn out his entrails. He was perfectly sensible, and faintly smiled as our hero approached him. 'I am going, Courtney,' he feebly uttered; 'my anchor is tripping, and it will soon be over.'

'Have better hopes, sir,' replied the lieutenant, deeply affected; 'I trust it is not so bad as you seem to fear.'

'I do not fear, Courtney,' rejoined the dying man. 'The officer who serves his country in warfare should always be prepared; and I am ready—quite ready; though it is hard to lose one's life through treachery. The captain of

that gang of robbers ought to be hung for his rascality——'

'He has already met that doom, sir,' answered the lieutenant. 'Your brave fellows have taken the law into their own hands; and yonder he swings, a warning to all false villains.'

'That was going too far, though, Courtney,—a sheer breach of discipline; it must be seen to,' murmured Rogerson. 'But avast—avast! my own hours are fleeting fast. Sims and Murray both wish to deter me from talking; but I have a few requests to make, Courtney, and the time but short to do it in. My will is in the hands of my legal man of business, and a copy of it will be found in my writing-desk. How is Andrews?'

The assistant surgeon, who had entered just previous, gave our hero a significant look, which, however, did not escape the keen observation of the captain: he became immediately aware that poor Andrews, the first-lieutenant, had already departed; and mournfully shaking his head, he said, 'The service has lost a brave and good officer; and in a few hours, Courtney—it may be less—the command of the corvette will devolve on you. I grieve to leave my fine fellows—' his voice faltered for an instant or two, but, rallying again, he went on—'and for a rascally Algerine—at a moment too when—but it is useless to complain.'

'You are wanted on deck, sir, if you please,' said the young midshipman Penrose, entering the cabin, and his eyes filling with tears at beholding his dying commander.

'I will be up directly,' returned the lieutenant; and then, addressing his captain—'Have you any commands, sir?'

'None, Courtney,—none,' answered he. 'See what's the matter,—let them repair damages, and return to me as soon as you can.'

The lieutenant pressed the hand of Rogerson as he extended it in silence, and then hurried on deck to witness the sea round the ship literally covered with Turbans; for the Algerines, to escape the expected vengeance of the seamen, had thrown themselves overboard, and though many were drowned, there were upwards of a hundred swimming about without hopes of mercy. The boats were employed in picking them up—some had got on board the corvette by means of ropes thrown to them; but so exasperated were the seamen at the treachery of the wretches that it was only the high state of discipline which rendered obedience to superiors imperative that prevented the sacrifice of every one.

'Come on board, sir,' reported a midshipman who had just returned from the frigate;—'Mr. Parker says, sir, there are some English captives on board, sir—slaves in chains; and he wants the armourer's mate to unrivet or cut them.'

'Take him with you, Mr. Brailsford,' directed the lieutenant; 'and tell Mr. Parker to send the prisoners on board the *Tulip*.'

'They've made short work with a good many of them, sir,' said the midshipman: 'there's a whole line of 'em hanging like swabs to the eyebolts in the main-deck beams. But Mr. Parker has put a stop to that fun. They richly deserved it, Mr. Courtney, and I couldn't help lending ——'

'Bear a hand with your duty, young gentleman!' exclaimed the lieutenant, arresting him in the confession he was about to make of the part he had taken in the summary proceeding. 'Tell Mr. Parker to keep the Englishmen to lend him a hand in refitting, but to send one of them to me that he may explain how they came to be captured.'

'Ay, ay, sir,' responded the midshipman as he ran forward to call the armourer's mate; and Courtney, having left the master in charge of the deck, again descended to the cabin. He found Captain Rogerson rapidly sinking; but he looked upon his approaching dissolution with an undismayed countenance: he saw death approaching, and he prepared to meet it. 'I have been wishing for you, Courtney,' said he. 'And first, I am charged with despatches for the Admiralty: they are in that box,' pointing to a small deal case perforated with holes, to which a heavy weight was attached. 'You will convey them without loss of time to their destination. Here are my orders from the commander-in-chief. Let Parker have charge of the frigate, and send her to Gibraltar. The clerk has written my communication for home, and I have put my signature to it: I hope I have done justice to everyone. Poor Andrews has left a widow and family; I have added a few lines to my will in his favour—I wish you to witness it.' The clerk put the paper before the lieutenant, who silently subscribed his name.—'And now, Courtney,' continued the captain, 'having fulfilled my public duty, I must say a few words to you in private.' The attendants took the hint and withdrew, whilst our hero's heart beat high and tumultuously, as he expected some disclosure relative to Miss Waldegrave: nor was he disappointed. 'Do you remember our trip across the Wight, Courtney?' inquired he; and the lieutenant assented by an inclination of the head, for he was too agitated to speak. 'You thought it was for pastime; but I had another object in view. I have a cousin,'—the lieutenant gasped, but it was unnoticed by Rogerson, who went on, 'she is young and beautiful, and I loved her with the most intense affection——'

'And she returned your love!' eagerly exclaimed our hero, borne away by the impetuosity of his feelings, and forgetting at the moment the condition of his rival.

The captain raised his eyes rather reproachfully at the young officer. 'No, Courtney, no: she did not return my love as I could have wished she should have returned it. She was kind, she was gentle, she was candid: she mourned my strong, undeviating attachment; she tried to soothe me with the soft accents of sisterly regard; she owned—ay, she unhesitatingly acknowledged her plighted faith—her devotion to another.'

A wild and irrepressible burst of hysterical laughter was uttered by our hero, as, pressing his hand to his forehead, he exclaimed, 'Fool that I was to doubt her! Thank Heaven, she is mine yet!'

'Who—who?' inquired Rogerson eagerly. 'Who is it that is yours?—my cousin Caroline?—Caroline Waldegrave? Courtney, you have deceived me!'

'For the sake of my future happiness, let me implore you not to cherish such a thought!' responded Ten-thousand. 'I knew of your attachment, Captain Rogerson; I saw you walking together. It was that which maddened me; yet I kept my secret. I thought her false to her troth, and ——'

'Enough, enough,' returned Rogerson. 'She never would tell me who her accepted lover was; yet, from what I have heard from others, I see it all now. Do you know those features?' He held up a miniature, and the lieutenant instantly recognised the portrait of her he loved. 'Let it be laid upon my heart after it has ceased to beat. But hear me, Courtney. Do not let me be buried at sea: carry me to England,—I would be laid in the tomb of my ancestors.' A flush of pride passed over his face. 'My time is short—I feel it,—the enemy is tugging at my heart-strings.' His mind wandered. 'Caroline! Caroline! will you not speak to me?—not one word? Ha! there is a cloud between us—it takes a human shape—it is red with blood—and ——' His head fell back exhausted, and the lieutenant requested the sentry at the door to call the surgeon.

'God bless yer honour, Mr. Courtney,' said the coxswain, smoothing down his hair with his roughened hand as he presented himself before the lieutenant, 'God bless you, sir! mayn't I have one sight o' the skipper — one parting word? Ourly ax him, your honour, just to see Bill Sykes for one minute.'

'Sykes,' feebly uttered the captain, having probably caught the sound of his name as the coxswain pronounced it.

'There! Lord love you, Mr. Courtney! he's axing for me;' said the tar. 'Do pray let me lay him alongside, if ounly for a minute.'

Bill was admitted. He approached the expiring remains of his commander, and, bending down over the body, his sobs were perfectly audible.

'Who's there?' inquired Rogerson, rallying again, and opening his eyes. 'Oh—ah, coxswain! The galley — and — haw — sea-green frocks and velvet breeches. Tell Mr. - haw—Mr. Andrews—' A flash of recollection returned. 'But where is he? Gone! gone! and I am about to follow in his wake! not according to etiquette though. Courtney—haw—see my boat manned, if you please. Sykes!'

'Yes, yer honour, it's Bill,' mournfully ejaculated the coxswain, vainly endeavouring to suppress his emotion.

'Take the galley and land at Ryde, hire a horse—but you know well enough what to do—and,' raising his hand as if holding something, 'give this letter yourself to Miss Waldegrave; and should there be any answer, bear a hand back with it. Make short miles, coxswain; there's a couple of guineas; no grog for your life till you come on board again.'

The poor fellow shook his head as he promised obedience; whilst the lieutenant became aware that Sykes was acquainted with circumstances which he himself was extremely desirous of ascertaining. The surgeon entered and motioned for everyone to withdraw. Sykes bent down over his worshipped commander, and his look was fraught with severe distress: his lips moved, but there was no utterance of the voice—and if a prayer, it was earnest though silent. He then slowly quitted the cabin, turning, however, to have one last glance before his departure.

When Courtney returned to the quarter-deck, Brailsford, the midshipman who had carried the armourer to the frigate, stepped up, and having touched his hat, introduced a released slave to the young officer. He was a tall and muscular man when he stood erect; but long confinement and hard fare had reduced his once strong frame, and bending to the oar in a galley had nearly doubled him together. A venerable beard descended to his breast; but he had no other clothing than a small skull-cap on his head, loose trousers in a filthy condition, and a tattered shirt.

'You are an Englishman, I understand,' said the lieutenant, eyeing him with intense interest. 'How long have you been in the clutches of these barbarians?'

'Upwards of twenty years,' returned the man. 'I was at sea when Nelson visited the port, and have suffered greater hardships from the tyrants since that time.'

'How and where did you fall into their hands?' inquired the officer: 'your age'—for he seemed verging on seventy—'ought to have procured you rest and respect.'

'I am not so old as I appear,' returned the other: 'coarse and scanty food, with unceasing labour in chains, are not calculated to improve the looks; but it is the deprivation of freedom—the lash of the oppressor, that goads the heart and withers up the strength of manhood. I was captured in a brig bound to the Levant, and there is now but one left of all her crew besides myself. Now I am once more free, yet the change does not gladden me so much as I thought it would. England—home'—he shuddered—'perhaps I am alone in the world.'

The lieutenant feelingly entered into the painful surmises of the released captive, and tried to soothe him with more cheering hopes. 'What station did you occupy in the brig?' inquired he.

'It was a dubious one, sir,' answered the man; 'part passenger, part sailor. At some fitting opportunity, if it please you, I will relate every particular.'

'How many more of you are there?' asked the lieutenant; 'and what has been their capacity, as far as your knowledge extends?'

'There are fourteen English and six French,' responded the man, 'most of them seamen; and we are looking out for an expected convoy, under the hope of catching a straggler or two.'

'Are these twenty men fit to be trusted, do you think?' inquired the lieutenant, earnestly watching the poor fellow's countenance.

'The brutality they have endured must, in a great measure, have obliterated that proud sense of humanity and honour which is characteristic of man in a civilised state,' answered the captive; 'but now they will meet with kind and generous

treatment, the joys of liberty, and a prospect of restoration to their native land, all these will excite their gratitude and render them devoted to the wishes of their deliverers, was there no other incentive to actuate them.'

'In which vessel do you wish to remain?' asked the lieutenant. 'Am I wrong in supposing that you have once moved in educated circles? if so, state the fact, and you shall mess with the lieutenants, or the midshipmen at the least.'

A heavy sigh escaped from the individual addressed, as if certain recollections of the past had been suddenly awakened. 'Your offer demands my warmest thanks,' said he: 'but, sir, whatever my early life has been, I am desirous now to sink into obscurity. May God reward you for your kindness to a dispirited stranger!'

Notwithstanding the emaciated and tattered appearance of the man, there was that in his mode of speaking and demeanour which could not be mistaken for low and vulgar life. There is a sort of freemasonry amongst real gentlemen that readily communicates the bond of brotherhood, and it is only the uninitiated that suffer themselves to be deceived by the showy semblance. Our hero was prompt in his decisions: he directed his servant to furnish the emaciated captive with clothing from his own stock, and to supply him with a plentiful repast.

In a few hours both ships were perfectly refitted; the prisoners were confined in irons, as their treacherous disposition could not be relied on; a prize crew of twenty men with the twenty released Europeans manned the frigate; and together they made sail for Gibraltar. The acknowledgment of Captain Rogerson had removed an oppressive burthen from the mind of the lieutenant: it had given him fresh life and renewed vigour, though the pleasing certainty of Caroline's regard was accompanied by the dark cloud which overshadowed the future. Poor Andrews was consigned to the 'seaman's grave' with every honour that could be shown consistent with the state of the dying captain, who never spoke again, but at midnight breathed his last breath, and our hero found himself in sole command.

Pursuant to the orders of Sir Richard Bickerton, every sail was cracked upon the *Tulip*, who left her prize far astern, and as darkness progressed, had almost disappeared. On the following morning, however, she was not only in sight, but had actually gained upon the corvette; and the wind freshening abaft, she brought up in fine style, to the great surprise of the Tulips. Wishing to communicate the death of their chief to Parker, our hero took in his canvas and hove-to. On coming within hail, the mournful event was told; and the lieutenant ascertained that Parker had been altering the trim of the frigate (which had been purchased from the Genoese) by bringing her down by the stern, and this was the cause of her improvement in sailing;—in fact, on renewing his course, the ships kept admirable company, and our hero resolved, if she caused him no detention, to carry the prize home with him to England.

A fine spanking breeze swept the vessels through the Gut; and as it was night when they passed the Rock, they were unobserved by the cruisers. But Fortune was not yet sufficiently satisfied with the favours she had conferred upon our hero; there were yet others in store, as if to reward him for past troubles. They got into soundings with the wind still fair, though light, and were enveloped in one of those dense hazes which are common in the Chops of the Channel. For one whole night they had not seen each other; but as morning approached, the breeze freshened, and the atmosphere partially cleared, so as to show two large ships on the larboard beam of the corvette, the most distant of which was made out to be the prize, who had also caught sight of the stranger and was closing towards her. Not a moment was lost in going to quarters in the corvette, and edging more away to port, they soon brought the stranger within hail. She was evidently a two-and-thirty gun frigate, and the private signals were unanswered. 'Stand to your guns, my men!' uttered our hero, in a suppressed tone, though it was distinctly heard fore and aft. 'Fire if I should wave my hat.' He then raised his speaking-trumpet,—'Ho, the ship ahoy!'

'Halloo!' was the response which echoed amongst the *Tulip's* sails as the vessels were closely approaching to each other.

'What ship's that?' demanded the lieutenant. 'This is his Britannic Majesty's ship *Tulip*, bound to Plymouth.'

'Sacré Anglais!' returned a loud and defying voice, in French. 'Voilá mon nom et ma nation!' and a rattling broadside flew over the corvette, rending the courses and carrying away some of the shrouds, but without injuring a man.

The lieutenant waved his hat, and the broadside was returned with a precision that told in every discharge: he then dropped astern; and Parker ranging up on the starboard side of the Frenchman,—for he had hoisted the tri-colour,—managed to bring all his main-deck guns to bear. The corvette was again ready, when another large ship, looming like one of the line, showed herself astern as if hastening to join in the action. Ten-thousand knew not whether she was French or English; but he felt he had no alternative but to fight. He got close to the Frenchman's quarter,—yawed broad away to starboard, and poured in a well-directed fire that brought down the enemy's mizen-mast; and Parker making show of renewing his attack, the French second in command (for the chief had fallen) hailed that he had surrendered: and thus, in less than a quarter of an hour, our hero, to his delight and astonishment, found himself the victor over a ship vastly his superior. But there was the ship astern, and 'perhaps the Frenchman had struck to prevent the effusion of blood, well knowing that she would soon be retaken.' Thus calculated our hero: but the matter was set at rest when the Frenchman was boarded, and the second in command was brought back to the corvette. 'Monsieur,' said he, as he surrendered his sword to the young lieutenant, 'there is no dishonour in yielding to numbers. A large frigate, a heavy corvette, with a seventy-

four coming up, are odds too fearful to contend with. *La Pallas* is yours,'

Ten-thousand did not undeceive him, but lost not a single moment in securing the prisoners in the hold of their own ship; and leaving her with Parker, he reconnoitred the advancing stranger, who, the moment she made out English colours, immediately shortened sail and hauled to the wind. But the corvette was too close for her to escape, and in another hour he had recaptured a large Chinaman belonging to the Honourable East India Company, that had been taken by a French squadron the previous day; and the prize-master, when he first saw the other ships, took them for the friends from whom he had parted. The English crew of the Indiaman had not been removed, though the captain and some of the officers had; she was therefore turned over to a portion of her own people with an officer of the *Tulip* in command, and the rest were sent on board the French frigate with ten men from the corvette.

Nothing could exceed the exasperation and mortification of the Frenchman when he ascertained the actual state of affairs;—he cursed his stars, and earnestly, even on his knees, implored his captor to let him return to his ship and fight him again; but this *modest* request not being complied with, he raved and tore his hair like a madman, so that at length they were compelled to put him under restraint. A jury mizen-mast was rigged in prize the second, and a fresh gale coming on, they bore up for England. The succeeding day they made the land,—the wind blew right up Channel,—the Eddystone light showed itself that evening, and not liking to run into Plymouth in the dark, they continued their course, were off the Needles the next morning, and rattled away for Spithead.

The corvette, in deep mourning, and her ensign and pennant half-mast, led in; next came Brailsford in the Algerine; then Parker (who had been shifted) in the French frigate; Penrose in the Chinaman bringing up the rear. Such a goodly and costly display of prizes had scarcely ever before been seen, and certainly never as captured by one vessel of so inferior a force. It is true that the Frenchman had been led into a mistake through a clever ruse; but that did not detract from the merit of the thing; and there were the whole safe in a British port.

The guard-boats soon announced the glorious achievement amongst the shipping at Spithead; and as soon as the anchor was down, our hero went on shore and waited upon the admiral with the despatches. It is unnecessary to repeat the warm eulogies of the veteran, or the congratulation of Captain Yorick, who entered the admiral's office purposely to see his gallant protegé; for the *Jason* was then in harbour refitting, and the knowledge of the action had been gleaned from the boat's crew of the corvette,—in fact, it was speedily spread with numerous exaggerations throughout Portsmouth, and none were more enthusiastic in applause than Yorick himself.—Yes—there was one, who had hastened to the Sally-port, and whose voice was heard impatiently hailing Bill Sykes.

'What cheer, Bill? what cheer, my hearty?—plenty o' prize-money, eh! And how's your skipper? Bill?—a regular dare-devil, I'm tould!'

'He's on his beam-ends, Mr. Blocks,—hove down for a full due,' answered the coxswain mournfully.

'Your first-leftenant 'll get promoted,' responded the gunner—for it was he, and, fearing he might hear something unpleasant relative to his foster-child, he worked a traverse in his inquiries.

'Mr. Andrews has struck, Mr. Blocks, and his body is somewhere aground in the Mediterranean,' answered Sykes.

The heart of the gunner beat tumultuously—he longed yet feared to ask the fate of our hero, till at length he uttered, 'And who is in charge then, now?'

'Muster Courtney,' replied the coxswain. 'But, avast! I'll come ashore and tell you all about it.' He did so, to the great gratification of the honest and kind-hearted gunner, who kept exclaiming, 'I knew it! d—— it, I knew it! Well done, Ten! I shall see him an admiral yet! Hurrah!'

A chaise-and-four drove rapidly up to the door of the admiral's office, and the lieutenant was ordered to proceed without loss of time to the Admiralty with his despatches. A crowd had collected, who enthusiastically cheered him as soon as he made his appearance; but one well-remembered countenance attracted his attention—it was that of his generous friend and benefactor; his hand was instantly extended and his head uncovered in token of affection and respect. The gunner felt both; he grasped the stretched-out hand, and whilst heartily shaking it, he gazed with real heartfelt delight at the manly countenance of the young officer, and then exclaimed, 'God bless you, Ten!—I knew it! d—— it, I knew it!—you'll have a flag yet!' and waving his hat, he shouted, 'Hurrah—hurrah!' as the lieutenant entered the carriage, which dashed off at a tremendous pace, cheers and congratulations hailing him on every side.

Arrived in the metropolis, the despatches were safely delivered at the Admiralty; but our hero's fame had got there before him, as the telegraph had been instantly set to work even previous to his departure from Portsmouth, so that he had only to recapitulate what had taken place. The event was looked upon as of considerable national importance; the newspapers were filled with the bold exploit, and our hero (who had taken up his quarters with General Edmonds) became the lion of the day. The First Lord presented him with his commission as master and commander: he was admitted to an interview with his Majesty, who not only conferred upon him the honour of knighthood, but insisted on his being raised another step to post-rank, and the choice of either of the ships given him to command: he chose the *Tulip:* the India Board presented him with a rich sword and five thousand pounds: he was invited to dine with the Lord Mayor at the City festival, which took place in a few days: in short, work would have been cut out for him during the whole of the coming winter; but he

had important duties to perform, and he hurried back to Portsmouth. The remains of Captain Rogerson had been transferred to the family mausoleum, where a handsome monument was erected to his memory at the expense of Government; and our hero prepared to visit Miss Waldegrave, to announce in person the decease of her brave and noble-minded cousin. Before proceeding further, however, it will be as well to revert to what was taking place amongst the Wentworths, which I shall do in a fresh chapter.

CHAPTER XVIII.

'This is the very top,
The height, the crest, or crest unto the crest,
Of murder's arms.'

SHAKESPEARE.

ALTHOUGH the Honourable Mr. Wentworth did not like wetting his hands in salt water, yet he had no objection to employment; and the influence of his father being exercised in his favour, he was promoted to the rank of master and commander, and appointed to command a division of the Sea Fencibles, stationed on the Channel coast of the Isle of Wight. This enabled him to wear his uniform, which he could not do upon half-pay; and it introduced him into society that would otherwise have discarded a young man in the prime of life who skulked ashore when his country needed his services: for in those days there was a nice sense of honour upon such points; in fact, it was so delicate a matter to suspect an individual of cowardice, that even the bare suspicion, if not practically refuted, was an extinction of favour amongst the fair sex, and the certain basis of insult from the rougher part of creation. Now, Mr. Wentworth was a great admirer of beauty, and no one could possibly imagine that a timid and dastard heart trembled under the handsome navy-blue with an epaulet on the left shoulder.

In his amours, however, Mr. Wentworth had neither principle nor sentiment, though he valued his sensual enjoyments in proportion to the innocency of his victim. He was also avaricious, and, notwithstanding his prospects of inheriting a princely fortune, he looked upon the contract with Miss Waldegrave as a mere money transaction, and would have paid her but little attention, but for the feelings of revenge against our hero, whose happiness he hoped to blight, either by a premature marriage with Caroline, which would render forfeit the principal portion of her fortune, or by a union with himself, which must separate them for ever. He was totally ignorant of the change of name and patronage which the lieutenant had received; for Ten-thousand, in his letters to Caroline, which Wentworth had suppressed, had never made mention of the subject; and, not seeing his name in the Navy List, he hoped that misfortunes had pursued him, and he had left the service.

Amongst the females who had yielded to the base seductions of Captain Wentworth was one of superior education and loveliness. In an evil hour her confiding and orphan heart placed her at the disposal of a villain; but even here her sense of virtue did not forsake her. Wentworth had pleaded his rank in life as rendering it impossible to make her publicly his wife against the declared will of his father and the contract with Miss Waldegrave; a private marriage was therefore proposed and acceded to, and poor Lucy was soon after neglected and discarded, the betrayer asserting that both the clergyman and the license were a cheat and fabrication. Alas! the unhappy girl was in that situation which demanded the utmost sympathy; but the cold-blooded wretch, who had been actuated by the spirit of revenge to perpetrate the injury, knew nothing of commiseration or pity, though at times he suffered considerable mental distress from the stings of remorse.

The noble lord still remained the lonely hypochondriac; and Aunt Alicia, doting on the young heir, yet assuming authority over him which he spurned, retained the management of family arrangements. The young ladies continued much the same as before, except Miss Waldegrave, to whom the anchorite had imparted the interview with the young lieutenant when he visited that part of the island in company with Captain Rogerson. From that time Caroline sought every opportunity to pass as much of her time as possible at the cavern in the cliff, where the mild and amiable demeanour of the recluse so won upon her regard and confidence, that she disclosed all the secrets of her heart and found consolation in the midst of sorrow.

Dawes still continued his lawless career, although enrolled as a non-commissioned officer in the Fencibles; but on more than one or two occasions he had rebelled against the overbearing and tyrannical disposition of his superior, who had even struck him a severe blow, which was never forgotten and never forgiven, and the period for retribution was longed for with an earnestness that kept the flame of resentment glowing in the breast of the daring but wily smuggler.

Such was the posture of affairs when Sir Edward Courtney arrived in England, and became the subject of admiration at every mess, whether on shore or afloat: even Wentworth had drunk the toast to his name without knowing that the gallant young man was the foundling of the ocean whom he had nearly deprived of life. Miss Waldegrave received the intelligence of her cousin's death, and her warm regrets were excited at his untimely end; but she was aware of that of which others were not—the identity of Blocks as Courtney, and she rejoiced in the prosperity of the brave young man to whom her pledge of constancy had been given.

Our hero had held more than one conversation with Bill Sykes relative to the conveyance of letters from Captain Rogerson to Caroline, and he determined as early as possible that the honest coxswain should do the same office for him. On his arrival at Portsmouth, he resumed command of the *Tulip;* and having devoted a short time to his aged foster-parent whose name he bore, the galley landed him and his young friend Parker (now a commander) at Ryde, from whence he proceeded to the hotel, purposing to despatch Bill Sykes as an avant-courier to the cottage to announce his intention of visiting his

lordship, but in point of fact to convey an earnest request to Miss Waldegrave to give him a previous meeting at the cavern in the cliff. Of course this latter was to be done privately, and the coxswain was directed to be especially cautious in the delivery of the letter.

Away went Bill well mounted on a good strong horse, and after occasionally freshening the nip at the houses which lay in his way, he was passing through the lane where the rencontre between the two officers had taken place which has been before described, when the cry of a female voice for help attracted his attention, and, heaving-to, he listened for the direction from which it proceeded. A second cry afforded him the desired information ; but the hedges were high, and there was no gate nigh hand through which he could make a passage. Again the voice of distress was heard coming from a field or two distant, and this was too much for Bill : he ran the animal at the lowest gap he could find, expecting that the creature would break through ; but, to the surprise of the honest coxswain, he found himself flying over the hedge, the horse having taken a leap in true fox-hunting style, and come down cleverly on the other side—Bill always boasted proudly of this feat—going away at a slashing pace in the proper direction, as if instinct had instructed the animal that help was needed. But another hedge lay in the way, and over they went again, descending into a by-path, where two lurking scoundrels were plundering and ill-using a young woman.

'Pirates, by ——!' shouted Bill ; and riding full at the nearest, he knocked him down, and then dismounting, laid about him with his heavy stick, administering punishment in no very sparing manner ; but he could not delay so as to secure his prisoners, and therefore he was compelled to leave them. The horse stood perfectly still whilst this was going on, except in one instance, when he flung out behind at the fellow who had been rode over, and was approaching to assist his comrade. Bill declared he did it 'quite Christian-like, as if he savvy'd the know-nothing was a rascal ;' and he shared his grog with him at the next house they stopped at.

The young female was about nineteen years of age, extremely pretty in features and person, and very neatly dressed. She warmly expressed her gratitude to the coxswain, who undertook to see her in safety to the next village. 'And what brought you out of your latitude in that 'ere goose's-gangway sort of a place?' inquired he.

'I was crossing the island on foot,' replied she, 'and was directed that way, as being the shortest.'

'And where are you bound to, my precious?' asked Bill, as, leading his horse, he walked by her side, purposing to make up for the stoppage, as he said, 'by carrying a taut press as soon as he got aboard again.'

'I scarcely know,' returned she. 'I have walked many weary miles from the metropolis, and have endured much pain and sorrow.'

'The met—metroperus? Where's that?' inquired Bill. 'I do not disactly remember hearing the name afore ; though somut runs in my mind, too, as I knows the place.'

'I mean London,' exclaimed the young woman, who could not, however, help smiling at the tar's simplicity. 'I have travelled on foot all the way from London to Portsmouth, and——'

'Lord love your heart! you don't look as if you ever belonged to the hard-working gang, either,' said Bill. 'But cheer up, my precious! I'll leave you in snug moorings ; and when I'm on my passage back from Lord Wentworth's——'

'Lord Wentworth's!' repeated she, interrupting the coxswain. 'Are you going to Lord Wentworth's, then? And do you know his son?'

Bill shook his head as he looked at the flushed cheek of his companion. 'I see the tack you're standing on,' said he ; 'but take care, my precious! I scorns to speak ill of my superiors, but if he ain't a d—— bad un, then there's no snakes in Virginny!'

'Oh, too fatally have I experienced it!' rejoined the female, as if speaking to herself. 'And yesterday I saw one who will fearfully resent the injury, unless I can prevent it. Do you belong to any of the ships at Spithead?'

'Yes ; I have the honour to be cappen's coxsun in his Majesty's ship *Tulip*,' answered Bill, with an ill-affected attempt at humility.

'The *Tulip*?' replied she ; 'the ship that has been so fortunate? Then, sailor, you may indeed assist me, and I will put trust in your honour.'

'Ay, do, lovey!' exclaimed the coxswain ; 'it's al'ays the best way with me ; for, somehow or another, when I don't know the right bearings and distance o' things, why, Lord love you, I'm apt to sail large in my talk, and mayhap gives offence where I'd no manner of intention whatsomever. Put trust in Bill Sykes, and I'm d—— if ever he hoists false colours to delude a friend!'

'There is a lieutenant of the *Tulip* of the name of Parker,' said the young woman ; 'I think he was third lieutenant.'

'He *was* third leftenant, miss,' assented the coxswain, who, finding that matters were coming more closely home to himself as connected with his officer, assumed a greater show of politeness ; 'and a betterer man never carried his Majesty commission :—he's left us now.'

'Left you! and to what ship has he been appointed, then?' inquired she. 'Can any misfortune have befallen him?—he was in plain clothes when I saw him ; and it was only for a moment.'

'No misfortun in life, ma'am—unless being promoted to master and commander be a misfortun,' responded the coxswain.

'Thank God for that!' uttered the gratified female, as tears started from her eyes. 'The spirits of our parents will look down with pleasure on their son ; whilst I——' She stopped and shuddered.

'Can't speak to that,' said the coxswain, who was puzzled by her words, and yet did not like to manifest total ignorance of their meaning. 'If you knows my officer, as you appears to do, why then you knows a good seaman and a brave man ; but I'm thinking you like to have two anchors down at a time—or, what you 'long-shore folks calls, two beaus in your string.'

'You wrong me, sailor, by such a suspicion,' said the female, trying to suppress her tears:

'Lieutenant Parker is my brother. Yet why should I reveal it?—he who has gained so much honour, to be disgraced by the sister he so fondly loved!'

'Ax you ten thousand pardons, my lady, for being so free,' said Bill, taking off his hat. 'If you've had wrong done you, as I fears you have, the captain ull make all that square: and I'm bless'd if I wouldn't do anything to sarve you, in regard o' the sakes of them as al'ays treated Bill Sykes like a man.'

'I told you that I would trust you,' returned she with more firmness; 'but I cannot tell you now what has led to all this. Mr. Wentworth has deceived me by a false marriage, and—yet, oh! my poor heart, how fondly I love him still!'

'The picarooning wagabone!' mumbled the coxswain. 'Well, then, I'm blow'd if he don't get it, any how, as far as sarving out a double allowance of punishment goes!—and I'm bless'd if I don't have a hand in it too, if I can: I owes him a trifle or two in the ways of ould remembrances when we was in a frigate together, and I'm d—— if he don't get a black dog for a blue monkey, or my name's not Bill!'

They had now arrived at the village; and Sykes—having ordered refreshment for the lady, had a stiff nor'-wester himself, and, in compliance with his promise to the horse, given him his fair share of allowance—he urged Miss Parker to remain where she was till his return; but she was too eager to pursue her journey, lest her brother should meet with Wentworth and a hostile collision take place, to stay at the roadside inn, and when the coxswain quitted her she pursued her way. Bill executed his commission to admiration: a most pressing invitation was sent from his lordship to Sir Edward Courtney, in which the Honourable Mr. Wentworth joined. Caroline received her communication with eager delight, and the coxswain pocketed the King's portrait in gold, as he had often done before: a few lines were penned in return, expressive of her intention to meet him at the place appointed on the following morning.

But a change was about to take place at the habitation of the recluse; for on that very day they hoped to renew their affection, at early dawn a stranger appeared upon the beach, whose beard and apparel bespoke him of foreign parts. Restlessly he paced to and fro upon the shore beneath the cavern, and deep bursts of anguish frequently escaped his lips. Sometimes he essayed to ascend the rugged steps that led upwards to the hermitage, then paused irresolute and once more traversed amongst the rocks. 'Oh, God!' uttered he, 'this is indeed a trial! I had thought myself equal to the task; but the sickness arising from hope deferred overpowers my faculties and reduces me to childish weakness. Yet here I am once more upon my native land, and standing on the spot which my feet last pressed. The cave of the recluse is still tenanted: but by whom?—Hark! some one approaches.' He concealed himself behind a projecting rock.

The anchorite, who had been to visit one of the sick peasantry, made his appearance, slowly wending his way along the shingly shore. The sun had just arisen and threw his beams upon the waters—the early morn was tranquil and clear. 'Great and eternal Ruler of the universe,' said he, raising his hands and eyes to heaven, 'Thou whose ways are past finding out! hear the voice of the trembling suppliant who crieth to Thee for pardon and for peace. Adored be Thy name for benefits received; and, oh, bring me at length to Thine everlasting rest!' He paused a few minutes, and his lips moved in silent prayer: he then turned to the ocean. 'How delightful is the refreshing breeze after a sleepless night in the apartment of the sick! Here all is tranquillity and repose. Oh, who can look upon the smiling face of Nature and cherish unholy passions in the breast!—Here have I found an asylum from the storm;—Father of mercies, hallowed be Thy name! Such a scene as this—so calm—so beauteous, is it not calculated to allay the burnings of human strife? does it not impart a sacred consolation to the wounded spirit?'

'No!' replied the stranger, suddenly quitting his concealment, and presenting himself before the astonished recluse,—'No! for there are strifes in the breast which nothing can allay—there are wounds of the agonised spirit which no consolation can ever reach.'

'You err because you are mortal,' returned the aged man; 'but HE who knoweth our transgressions and remembereth that we are but dust and ashes in His sight, pitieth our frailties, and ministereth to every disease, whether of body or of mind. What art thou, stranger?'

'A wretch—an outcast—a man of crime!' answered the other as he wrung his hands wildly together. 'Years of penitence and misery have not diminished my guilt,—tears and bloody stripes have not washed away remembrance of what I am.'

The anchorite gazed with the most intense eagerness at the countenance of his companion, and every limb of his body trembled with emotion, though wholly unperceived by the stranger, whose eyes were fixed upon the ground. 'If any unatoned-for guilt lies burthensome on your soul, need I remind you that atonement is the first evidence of repentance, and repentance bringeth with it a remission of sin? I seek not to penetrate the hidden mysteries of a tortured conscience: but, oh! if you hope for salvation hereafter—if you look beyond this world to that which is to come, do justice—love mercy!'

'I can make no atonement here,' replied the agitated man. 'There was formerly an inhabitant of yon cavern to whom I would have addressed myself. But she was a female bowed down with age, and I had almost forgotten the long interval of years.'

'Her days are ended,' returned the hermit; 'she has inherited the joyous mansion of the blessed. I am her successor; and if you will enter my abode——'

'Will you—dare you give me shelter?' vehemently inquired the stranger. 'I? an outlaw—a mur—Ah! you would probe my secret to betray me,—you would surrender me up to—'

'—The throne of the Creator,' uttered the recluse, interrupting him with firmness and solemnity. 'At the footstool of Omnipotence would I pour out my petitions for that intercession which has been promised to all who truly repent. Who can tell,' and his voice faltered—'who can tell but there may be yet comfort in store for you? Come, then—the morning is advancing—come and share my humble meal; and then, oh God! be Thou my helper, and sustain me in my hour of coming trial!'

The stranger complied, and together they entered the cavern of the cliff, where the morning repast was prepared by the hermit and partaken of by both in comparative silence. At its close, 'And now,' said the anchorite, 'will you confide your griefs to me, so that I may pour the cordial balm of hope upon the bruised heart, and lead it on to virtue and to God?'

'Your words are like the refreshing breath of heaven to the fever-parched wretch,' rejoined the man. 'Yet—no, no! I dare not reveal my agony to mortal ears.'

'Shall I, then, endeavour to fathom the abyss of thought,' said the hermit inquiringly,—'shall I present a picture of human frailty common to mankind? And if it resemble yours, yes—I will administer my counsel and implore the Almighty to forgive. Art thou a husband and a father?'

'I was—I was!' answered the stranger; 'yes! both a husband and a father!—but, oh, God! where is my once idolized wife,—where is the child I would have loved with fond regard?'

'Did you, then, abandon them to a rough, unfeeling world?' asked the hermit in continuation;—'your daughter destitute of a father's care—your wife!—but possibly she was false to the sanctity of her marriage vow, and you——'

'This is probing me to the very quick,' responded the man, 'and the bare conjecture takes the voice of truth. I was duped—deceived—betrayed.—Yet who are you who thus shadow forth the visions of the past, and pierce my soul with anguish?'

'I but exercise imagination,' returned the hermit; 'the skilful physician must ascertain the symptoms before he can treat with the disease. You say you were deceived—betrayed: was it by some false—some pretended friend, who whispered the malignant tale in your too-ready listening ear?'

'Ah, there is horror in that thought!—thrilling, damning horror!' said the stranger as he rapidly paced the apartment. 'No! it was not a pretended friend—it was a demon in human guise! My wife was innocent—my child—But what is this? you faint—you fall!' and the hermit fell prostrate on the floor.

The stranger lost not a moment in raising the inanimate body; he tore open the vest of the anchorite's garments to afford him freer respiration, and there, upon a female bosom, rested a portrait of himself,—one which, in brighter, days, he had presented to the cherished wife whom he had loved, and who now lay insensible in his arms. This discovery, however, was not made on the instant, for a sudden rush of conflicting emotions had nearly deprived the stranger of sensibility: he knew the picture at the first glance, and a long interval of years was in a moment forgotten; he well remembered to whom he had presented it, and tearing away the fleecy locks that hung straggling over the brow of the recluse, a false beard came with it, and then he knew the countenance that had been concealed beneath.

At this moment footsteps were heard outside the dwelling. The stranger still retained his burthen, and could not possibly withdraw to secrete himself; and before the lapse of a minute, the smuggler Dawes presented himself within the porch, and, staggering a few paces in advance, fell upon his knees. His face was haggard and pale, his shirt and jacket at the breast was saturated with blood, and, gazing on the pair who were revealed before him, he ejaculated, 'Mercy! mercy! I have been a daring ruffian, defying Heaven! but, O Lord, be merciful!'

'Fear not, unhappy man!' said the stranger: 'I am, as you see, still a tenant of this earth, though your murderous hand consigned me to destruction.'

'Oh! I am dying!' exclaimed Dawes; 'I feel that I am dying! There is, then, one crime spared me. I have braved death in many an hour of peril without the quivering of a pulse—I have defied danger and dared the worst that could betide; but now that my last hour is approaching, the terrors of a mightier power are upon me, and yet I know not what it is. My strength is going fast; and these limbs, that never shook before in battle or in storm, now tremble like a leaf at nothing.'

'Peace, man! See!—she recovers!' said the stranger, as the recluse slowly returned to consciousness, and gazed wildly around. 'Adelaide!' continued he, in a rich mellow voice, although it was somewhat tremulous with emotion, 'Adelaide, my love—my wife! it is the arms of——'

'—My husband!' uttered she,—'yes, *my* husband; and he has pronounced me innocent! Say but the word again!—let me hear it once more, Waldegrave!—tell me that you believe me innocent; and then, O God, Thy will be done!'

'Yes, Adelaide!' replied the person addressed,—'yes, I believe you innocent—almost from the fatal hour which parted us I have known it! For yon monster, before he plunged me into the waves, told me of the whole plot that had been arranged to urge me to desperation.'

'I did—I did!' uttered Dawes; 'and now *my* turn is coming—I'm dying; and yet I dare not die! Can nothing be done to save me, if only for a few short hours?—Major,'—and a convulsive gasp quivered on his features,—'Major! I have much yet to tell you—you must not let me die!—Your daughter——'

'Have I, then, yet a child?' inquired the major, in a tone of exquisite feeling, such as only a parent can know. 'Adelaide! can you forgive the injuries I have heaped upon your head?—can you——'

'Ay, all—all, Waldegrave,—I can forgive all, now your voice—the voice of my husband—has declared me innocent. From the horrible moment of your departure down to the present

time, this cave has been my sanctuary. Jeannette received and concealed me till the hour of her dissolution, and then in these garments I succeeded to her place. Here have I remained unknown to everyone—even to my child, whose visits have been my only consolation in my misery.'

'Must I, then, perish without help?' said Dawes. 'Will you do nothing to stop these dreadful pangs? Am I to die like a dog?'

'You would have given me a dog's death,' returned Waldegrave, approaching him as he sat upon the floor, his head resting on his knees; 'but as forgiveness has been extended to me, so will I yield it to another.' And together they examined his wounds.

A rifle-ball had entered the left lobe of the breast, but had not passed out again; and it was evident from the symptoms that there was a great internal hemorrhage, that was rapidly shortening the wretched man's existence. 'Make your peace with God,' said the major: 'your hours are numbered.'

'Make my peace with God!' repeated the sinking smuggler. 'What's that? what am I to do? I have never known what God is!'

'Repent of your sins—acknowledge your transgressions,' said Mrs. Waldegrave. 'There is yet mercy even for the vilest.'

'Ay, Adelaide,' added the major, 'in heaven: but what mercy will be shown on earth to him who has the blood of a fellow-creature on his conscience? Twenty years have not erased the horrors from my memory of that night—that awful night—when I sent a fellow-creature unprepared, with all his guilt upon his head, into the presence of his Maker.'

'Avast, major, avast!' feebly gasped the smuggler. 'It was not your hand that sent the colonel to his long account; it was the knife of—— His head drooped, his hands dropped by his side, and he fainted before he could pronounce the name.

Adelaide and the major used their best endeavours to restore sensibility. The former had readjusted her disguise lest others should intrude, when a voice was heard below shouting for Dawes. 'Conceal yourself, Waldegrave,' said the recluse;—'I know the intruder, and he will be here directly. Retire to yon corner: you will find some winding stairs that lead to a cavity above. Haste! haste! I would not wish that they should see you yet.'

The major complied, the recluse resumed her disguise, and almost immediately subsequent to his departure, one of the smuggler's band, known as Gingerbread Jem, entered to inquire for his leader. 'He is here, desperately, if not mortally wounded,' returned the anchorite.

'There has been some foul work,' said the man. 'He promised to meet me at the Cove: he was not there; but I saw drops of blood, and have tracked them here. How, comrade! halloo!' shouted he, and shaking him roughly by the collar.

It took effect. The smuggler gave a convulsive shudder, and revived. 'Is that you, Jem?' said he feebly, and holding out his hand, which the other instantly seized.

'Who has done this?' inquired Gingerbread Jem. 'Have the Philistines been out? I saw the Swallow hove-to off the point; yet what right had they to fire!—you warn't upon the lay!'

'It was none o' them, Jem, depend upon it,' answered Dawes. 'The shot came from among the rocks; by what hand sent, I cannot say: although I suspects——' He paused.

'Whom do you suspect?—say whom it is,' demanded Jem, as if fearing suspicion might be directed at himself. 'Speak his name, and if I don't sarve him the same sauce, I'm ——. Who was it done it?'

The smuggler mournfully shook his head. 'I will tell you by-and-by,' said he. 'But bear a hand, Jem—make all sail to my cottage, and tell the ould woman of my mishap: my crop of life is working out—Jem, look smart, my boy, and send her here.'

'Your life might be prolonged by surgical assistance,' urged the recluse. 'Tell Mrs. Dawes, Jem, to bring—or do you yourself seek for a surgeon, without further loss of time. I will do all in my power to support your comrade till he arrives; my own skill is unavailing in such a case as this—he bleeds to death!'

'I wooll—wooll,' responded Jem, half blubbering, and shaking the smuggler roughly by the hand, 'I wooll bear a hand. And, d'ye hear, Petitoes! hould on, my boy—don't slip your grapplin'-rope till I come back.'

'Where's the Major?' uttered Dawes, as his eyes glared wildly round the apartment. 'Am I bewildered?—he certainly was here! I saw him, Jem, saw him, myself! Could it be a vision?—have I been dreaming?'

'Hasten, Jem! his mind is wandering—lose not an instant—a moment wasted may be the loss of a life!' urged the recluse with eagerness, fearful that the expressions of Dawes would excite suspicions in the breast of his associate, or that the mention of the major's name would lead him to prosecute a search.

Gingerbread Jem took his departure; and Waldegrave and his wife laid the wounded man upon a pallet which they had purposely removed into the outer apartment. The suddenness of the occurrence, and the predicament in which it placed the reconciled pair, had prevented further explanation with each other relative to the past; in fact, the present engrossed their whole attention, though the happy restoration to her husband and society with unblemished reputation thrilled with delight in the bosom of the hitherto recluse.

No one can look upon the dying unappalled, especially under circumstances like those which have been named: it revived in Waldegrave's mind recollections of his own fatal rencontre with the colonel, and the words of the expiring smuggler relative to the knife were of too much importance to be passed idly over. They questioned Dawes as to the purport of his language; but he became sullen and taciturn, and refused to give any reply, or only answered in suchwise as to involve the affair in deeper mystery. But if he confessed the whole to the aggrieved party, they were also the interested party, and it was

necessary to have someone present to testify to what the smuggler asserted.

Fear for her husband's safety had deprived Mrs. Waldegrave of that clearness of judgment which many years of retirement from the world had naturally produced; and he, not knowing exactly the extent of his liabilities, was undecided how to act. At length Mrs. Waldegrave determined herself to seek such efficient witness as would verify the expected confessions of the hardened smuggler; and, adjusting her disguise, she quitted the cavern, so that Waldegrave was left alone with the man who had sought his life. He sat down on the side of the pallet; the wounded smuggler writhed with pain and alarm, cursing his 'hard fate,' and occasionally starting up as the wavering intellect conjured up visions of the past, or a deranged imagination, wrought upon by superstition, presented some supposed supernatural appearance. Sometimes he looked eagerly at the major, and then covered his eyes with his hands as if to shut out some horrid spectre from his sight; at other times he gazed upon him deprecatingly, and sensible that he was still in existence.

'Ha!' exclaimed he, 'is it all come to this? Does the sea give back its dead? Did I not see you struggling in the waters which closed above your head as you sank in seventy fathoms deep? —What do you want with me now?—there are living witnesses that you were drowned—and I! —I shall go to hell for the deed!'

'Calm your mind, unhappy man,' returned the major soothingly. 'Guilty as your intentions were, it pleased a watchful Providence to save me. You have my forgiveness—seek that of Heaven.'

'It is impossible!' shrieked Dawes as he convulsively shook with agony. 'I saw you perish —yet here you are before me, ghost or devil, come to carry me away. Yes, yes! I am on my beam-ends now, and you run athwart my hawse to bewilder me in my course,—you come to triumph over me! Your very look tells me I am consigned to the bottomless pit as a murderer; but why appear against me here before I quit this world?—Ha! you would give evidence in a court of justice.—They say "dead men tell no tales"—your oath will not be taken.'

'Once more I tell you that my life was saved,' said the major persuasively; 'so that the actual crime of murder, as far as I am concerned, you are guiltless of. But in the lawless life that you have led——'

'I know it—I have been lawless, as you call it,' returned Dawes, more composedly; 'but who can charge me with dishonesty? I never cheated a fair dealer or betrayed a comrade.—Yet the thing seems impossible! I launched you overboard, and the light of the stars danced upon the smooth waters that flowed over your grave. If you were saved, how was it done?—ay, how was it done? tell me—tell me that!'

'I dived to some distance from the boat; for the weight you attached was so loosely secured that I instantly disencumbered myself of it,' replied the major.

'That was Cockleshell Jack's doing,' observed the smuggler impatiently; 'he was ever a lubberly dog!'

'I hope it was done in mercy,' returned the major; 'at all events it promoted my safety; and when you had quitted the spot, which was almost immediately, I swam till nature was nearly exhausted. The tale you had revealed to me—the treachery which had been practised upon me—nerved my heart to renewed vigour. I struggled hard for life, because I earnestly wished to be avenged of the wretches who had destroyed my happiness and fame, and brought such heavy desolation on my heart. I felt not the wounds in my body, for there was a deeper wound in my honour and in my mind: one thing alone engrossed my thoughts—'twas retribution!'

The major paused a minute or two as vivid remembrances revived the horrors he endured, and a deep groan escaped him. 'Go on,' eagerly exclaimed the smuggler; 'why do you stop?—you have a life before you, whilst my very minutes are told out: go on!'

'Long did I buffet the waves,' continued the major, complying unhesitatingly with the entreaties of the smuggler, and not without hope that his own ready communicativeness would induce the other to make still further disclosures, —'Long did I buffet the waves: but my strength began to fail, my eyes grew dim,—in short, I was rapidly giving way to the grasp of death —when opening daylight showed me a vessel standing towards me right in my very track. My spirits rallied for a renewal of exertion. Onwards she came; I shouted, but it only wasted my breath. She might pass me by unheeded, and then my fate was inevitable! Broader daylight spread itself over the ocean, and nearer came that vessel. I made a few strokes towards her; she was within hail again; I shouted, but she held on her way. Despair lent me strength—it was life, honour, reputation, that I battled for; she was close to me, and once more I raised a cry for help. Oh, God! it was responded to; I heard human voices—I saw the vessel heave-to! Joy overpowered me—my senses were failing—yet I could distinguish the sound of oars as they rapidly dipped in the water. I became insensible, and the next thing that I can remember was finding myself in a warm and comfortable berth, where I was kindly and carefully attended. The brig that had picked me up was bound to Smyrna; we were already out of the Channel when I was restored to sensibility. The wind was fresh and fair, and we were carried forward on our passage without delay; but in the Mediterranean we were captured by an Algerine, and consigned to slavery. Thus I remained for years, and have only lately been released by the gallant action of a British cruiser.'

''Tis a wonderful story,' murmured Dawes—'a very wonderful story! And she, too, your wife, whom all thought lost, starts up before us on the instant! For years we have been confederate, yet the mystery was concealed from me, and now—oh, there has been foul play to both on you! I own it, major,—it has come home to Clairfait, and it is coming home to me.'

'The eye of the Almighty never slumbers,'

responded Waldegrave impressively; 'bad deeds will never prosper; but yet you have it in your power to make me some amends for all that I have endured. Tell me, then, if you hope for peace hereafter,—tell me what you meant by saying that it was not my hand that sent Colonel C—— to his long account, but the knife of someone whom you did not name. Who was that person?'

'No, no!' returned the smuggler; 'I have never snitched upon a comrade, nor will I do it now. What! Petitoes lay an information against an ould friend? Never, major!—never!'

'You refuse, then, to make the only compensation that you can offer?' urged Waldegrave in a tone of earnest entreaty. 'You have said sufficient to induce me to believe that the colonel fell by other hands than mine: my life is in jeopardy, then, for a crime I did not commit; and if it is sacrificed through your concealment of the knowledge you possess, you are equally a murderer as if my bones were now in the depths of the ocean.'

'There is some truth in that, too,' answered Dawes, touched by the forcible appeal which had been made to him; 'but still I dare not turn informer,—it is a character I have always hated with the most bitter and deadly hate. No, no, I cannot—will not turn informer!'

The major was greatly distressed at the man's continued stubbornness; but he saw it would be useless to urge him further then, though he still hoped to excite him to better feelings by impressing on his mind a due sense of his situation. 'Time with you is fleeting fast,' said he; 'you cannot long survive. Pray, then, to the Omnipotent that he may not consign your immortal soul to everlasting torments.'

'Pray!' reiterated the smuggler; 'what do I know about praying? You may as well tell me to pay out a sarmon! Yet I feel I am dying—a murdered man: but I'll be revenged on the villain yet!' A spasm of anguish shook his frame and drew him up together as he screamed out: 'Oh, it's coming!—hould me, major!' He struggled violently as he grasped the major's arm. 'I'm on the launch; hould on by me, major—hould on like h—! Another turn—ha! ha!—the enemy is beat off—the enemy——' His head dropped upon his shoulder, and he fell back exhausted.

In a short time the wife of Dawes arrived with the recluse; but previous to their entering, the major, who heard them approaching, withdrew. Gingerbread Jem soon after made his appearance with a surgeon (who occupied the house formerly in possession of Clairfait's parents), and an immediate examination of the wound took place. The inspection was unsatisfactory; he gave no hope of the smuggler's recovery, although he did not apprehend a very early dissolution. He questioned Dawes relative to the individual whom he suspected to have perpetrated the deed; but the man refused to unfold his thoughts upon the subject, and the surgeon, after vainly trying to find the ball, ultimately left him with strict injunctions to the recluse not to suffer him to be molested or disturbed.

The wretched being, tortured both mentally and bodily, without one hope to which he could cling, and with the weight of guilt upon his conscience, lay groaning in agony; but no word beyond imprecations hurriedly ejaculated passed his lips, except in whispers to his wife, whose grief was genuine, but mingled with strong feelings of cherished revenge. What their conversation was applied to, did not transpire beyond themselves; and at length, on his becoming more calm, she quitted him to execute promptly some commands he had given to her. Adelaide informed her husband that her mission had failed, but implored him to place his reliance on the kind interposition of Providence.

Mrs. Dawes had not left the place many minutes,—the dying man lay more composed,—when footsteps were again heard. Waldegrave retreated to his concealment. The door of the habitation was forcibly thrown open, and the Honourable Captain Wentworth suddenly rushed in: he gave a hasty and wild glance around him, saw the smuggler extended on his pallet, and an hysteric laugh rang wildly through the cavities of the rock. 'Not yet dead!' shouted he, 'and still sensible! You have been tampering with him,—you have been worming out his confessions, I suppose—but the secret must end where it began—neither of you go hence alive!' He seized the smuggler by the throat, and roughly shaking him, added, 'What have you been revealing to this hoary hypocrite? But no matter; you are both here within my power, and defenceless. Speak the truth, or, by Heaven! you shall both of you die upon the spot! What has he been communicating to you or to his wife?'

'To she,' replied the smuggler, pointing to the recluse,—'I mean, to, to him, nothing—not a sentence. My wife knew the whole before. Your rifle was more true than when you fired at —Clairfait, Master Charles.'

'Go on, vile miscreant! I defy you now!' exclaimed Wentworth, as the scowl of a demon passed across his features. 'I have no time to spare for vulgar recriminatory language.' He closed the door and again returned to the pallet. 'Such witnesses, whether for or against me, must not live. He turned to the recluse: 'Say, mummer, what has the wretch revealed!'

'To me, not one sentence,' replied Adelaide firmly; 'but your own tongue has betrayed you to be the wilful murderer.'

'Ay, say you so!' rejoined Wentworth, in a tone of mingled scorn and rage. 'Your own words have sealed your doom. Stand back, and stir not!'

'I put my trust in Heaven, that has never deserted me in the hour of danger,' responded the recluse with boldness. 'Wretched man, beware of the wrath of the Almighty!'

'Leave *me* to balance my accounts with the celestials,' replied the hardened fiend, as, grasping the resisting Dawes by the throat, he compressed his windpipe for the purpose of effecting strangulation. 'No, no! this fellow would betray—would impeach. and where should I be then? My own safety demands his removal.'

'Coward and rascal!' uttered Dawes, as,

rallying all his strength, he threw his assailant from him; 'I fostered your early years—have never divulged one word, and now you are my murderer!—Yes! it was your hand that fired the shot—yours—the son of——'

'—Lord Wentworth!' shouted the young man as he again sprang upon the smuggler, and, gripping him by the throat, prevented further utterance.

Dawes, exhausted by the effort he had made, fell backward on the pallet: the strong hand of the destroyer was aiding the assault of the King of Terrors, and he would soon have ceased to breathe, but for the timely succour of the major, who entered stealthily, and with a blow felled the assassin to the earth, where, rolling on his back, he lay insensible. Wentworth was in an undress uniform, but still it betokened his rank, and Waldegrave was utterly at a loss to account for so strange an occurrence as he had been privy to; for it was evident that murder was intended, and that too, apparently, of a most determined and undisguised character. 'Do you know this officer, Adelaide?' inquired he.

'It is the son of your former friend, Mr. Acheson, now Lord Wentworth; and the man who is bound by contract to your daughter,' replied she.

'The son of Mr. Acheson, now Lord Wentworth?' repeated the major, as confused remembrances passed across his mind. 'Can Mr. Acheson have such a son as this?'

'No, no!' murmured Dawes with faltering breath. 'The acknowledgment has already cost me my life; although your generous act, major, has given me fresh scope to hould on by. He degraded me last night, and added blows to the degradation. Stung by insults, I taunted him with his base birth—told him I knew his secret, and threatened to reveal it. I am now dying, and will not utter falsehood!—that fellow is no child of Mr. Acheson's!' He paused a minute, and then loudly laughed. 'Ha! ha! I'm strong again—my energies return. Life for life! This dirk is his.' And he caught up the unsheathed weapon of the young officer, which had fallen from the scabbard on to the bed during the struggle. 'Now, now!' shrieked he; and by one violent spring he threw himself from the pallet by the side of his prostrate enemy, raised the dagger high above his breast, and it would have been buried in Wentworth's heart, but for the timely intervention of Waldegrave, who stayed the uplifted hand. 'Nay, nay, major, do not hould me!' implored the smuggler; 'loose my arm, and I will tell you all.' He struggled. 'But if you stay my just revenge, the secret shall go with me to the grave!'

'That you possess information which might be of essential service to me, and perhaps restore me to society, I am well aware,' responded the major as he wrested the dirk from the smuggler's hand; 'but I will not stand quietly by to witness so reckless and vile a deed, even to purchase all that I have lost!'

'You have said it, major,' returned Dawes: 'and your obstinacy be upon your own head! —Halloo, Jem!—Coldtoes! where are you all? —No one answers, and I am desarted in my hour of need; but still my hands are free, and thus I pay my debt!' With the instantaneousness of a flash of lightning, he clenched his fist and struck his enemy a heavy blow in the face between the eyes. But the exertion was too much for the exhausted condition of the smuggler; he sat for an instant as if paralysed, and then the dark crimson blood came rushing from mouth, ears, and nostrils: his gaze was fixed upon the bruised countenance of Captain Wentworth; he drew one quivering respiration, planted his clenched hand firmly upon the earth on either side of him, raised himself some distance from the ground, fell heavily his whole length upon the rocky floor; a short convulsive shudder followed, and the once daring reckless smuggler was a corpse.

The body of Dawes still lay extended by the side of his inanimate foe, and the major, with horror-stricken countenance, was standing over them with the naked dagger in his hand, when another visitor presented himself in the person of our hero. At his first entry he seemed appalled at the spectacle he beheld; but, fixing his attention more intently upon Waldegrave, he uttered, 'Ha! the Algerine captive! Have we, then, rescued a villain from perhaps well-merited slavery? What is the meaning of all this? Murder has been committed: and your hands are darkly stained with blood, whilst they grasp the deadly instrument!'

'See, Sir Edward! returned Waldegrave, as he held the dirk towards him: 'the blade is clear and bright. No, sir, I am innocent of all this!—the blood upon my hands is caused by my rendering aid to the wounded man. Yet it would seem as if retributive justice would have its due: he is dead, sir—he is dead, and I fear my last hope has perished with him.'

'How has all this happened, then?' inquired our hero, turning to the recluse. 'Here is a naval officer and a seaman side by side, and dead!' He leaned down over the inanimate body of Wentworth, and gazed intently on his features; for a moment his frame shook with emotion. 'Ha!' uttered he, 'that face is known to me! It is he!—it can be no other than my implacable enemy—it is Captain Wentworth!'

'You are right,' said the recluse; 'and it is by his hand that the life of him who now lies quietly by his side has been destroyed—he is a murderer!'

'I can readily believe it,' answered Courtney, shuddering as he contemplated the degradation of human nature. 'But this to me is extremely unfortunate: I expected to meet Miss Waldegrave here;—have you seen her, holy father?'

'Miss Waldegrave, sir!' exclaimed the major, somewhat impetuously. 'By heavens! the plot seems to thicken! Under what claim do you expect a secret interview with Miss Waldegrave, Sir Edward?'

'When I have ascertained your right to put that question, I will answer it as it merits to be answered,' replied Courtney proudly.

'It must—it shall be answered!' returned the major with vehemence; but, on a look from the

recluse, his voice softened—his manners became more gentle, and he added : 'I have had many things to chafe my temper, Sir Edward. To you my best gratitude is due for generous kindnesses received;—you were my deliverer from chains and bondage—you have restored me to my country !'

'For these I claim no thanks,' responded Courtney, with impatience. 'But tell me, sir,' turning to the recluse, 'have you seen Miss Waldegrave?'

'Not to-day,' answered the person addressed ; 'nor have I received any communication from her. But, with so horrible a scene, Miss Waldegrave must not come hither.'

'She is here already, good father,' exclaimed Caroline, who tripped lightly in, but recoiled with horror when she beheld the bloody tragedy that had been acted. 'Oh, God of mercy !' she uttered, 'what is this?'

Sir Edward was instantly by her side. 'Let us withdraw, Miss Waldegrave,' said he ; 'this is no place for female delicacy. See !—he stirs ! —the villain is recovering !'

'It is Charles !' said the shuddering girl, as they raised Wentworth from the ground ; and as he was gradually restored to consciousness, she trembled with agitation. Waldegrave, obeying a signal from the recluse, cautiously withdrew.

The opening eyes of Wentworth were fixed upon Courtney and Caroline : it seemed to have an instantaneous effect—he gasped, he struggled, he stood erect. 'Hast thou found me, oh, mine enemy !' he exclaimed. 'Now may endless perdition be my portion, if I do not have revenge !'

Courtney gave the wretched man but one look : it was filled with haughty contempt and defiance, and, drawing the arm of Caroline within his own, he quitted the dwelling at the moment Wentworth again sank to the earth, his earnest gaze bent upon the receding pair. Scarcely had their shadows passed away from the threshold, when the entrance was again darkened by a female figure, who looked cautiously in, till, observing the prostrate officer, she ran forward, fell on her knees by his side, and, grasping his hand, glared wildly in his face.

'Oh, Wentworth !' said she, 'I am with you once more ! Why—why have you deserted me ? But I will not upbraid ;—you are hurt—you need my care—let me attend you.'

'D——n !' muttered the obdurate wretch, as he spurned the pleading girl away from him. 'What do you do here, Lucy ? Have you too come to torment me?'

'Oh, do not drive me from you, Wentworth !' implored the sobbing girl. 'You cannot tell what I have suffered since you left me ! and but for the kindness of a sailor, I might have been robbed and murdered. My brother has arrived —nay, more, I have seen him, though he did not know it ;—nay, still more, he is in the island, and is coming with Sir Edward Courtney to visit your father !'

'Your brother coming here, Lucy?' responded the unworthy officer, as he once more stood erect. 'The storm is gathering ; but my vengeance will be complete !—Blocks, too !—ah, there is danger in that, and I must away.'

'Oh, do not leave me, Wentworth !' implored the weeping Lucy. 'Remember your solemn pledges—think of my present situation—my brother, too, he also will cast me off ! and for the sake of all that you hold dear in heaven or on earth, do not abandon me now !'

'I cannot stop, Lucy,' answered Wentworth more kindly, as if touched by her appeal, 'nor will I abandon you—there is money.' He held forth a purse to her, which she refused to touch. 'Nay, but you will require it,' urged he. 'I am beset with toils—there lies my enemy, the only one I feared, safe in death ! You may remain here, Lucy, till I send to you. Do not seek to follow me ;' for, as he prepared to withdraw, the unhappy girl had made ready to accompany him ;—'nay, you must not—shall not ! for, Lucy, I am desperate !' He thrust her back with violence, and hastily descended the steps.

'Lost—wretched Lucy !' said she, as she wrung her hands in the bitterness of distress. 'Oh, how am I to meet my noble-minded brother ! May God forgive you, Wentworth !—my heart is breaking, and I have no friend in the wide world——'

'Look up to Him who has declared that he will be a parent to the orphan, and the defence of the helpless,' said the recluse with solemnity. 'Remain here, poor child : if you are hungry, there is food for you ; if weary, there is a place of rest ; and may the Father of mercies restore tranquillity to your erring mind !'

'May God reward you !' returned Lucy ; 'but tranquillity will never more visit my wretched heart ; it is bowed down, it is breaking !' and she seated herself upon the pallet and sobbed convulsively, whilst the recluse in whispers held communication with Waldegrave.

Some time elapsed in almost silence, when suddenly a loud wail was heard in the outer apartment, and the wife of Dawes burst in and threw herself upon the corpse. She was followed into the room by our hero and Gingerbread Jem ; the former with his dress torn and dirty, as if he had been engaged in some affray.

'Murder ! murder !' shrieked the woman ; 'he has killed my husband, and wanted to kill me !—Murder ! murder !'

'Your cries cannot recall the dead to life,' said Courtney persuasively, 'and therefore are useless ; though the first burst of sorrow will have its way.'

'Oh, sir,' exclaimed she, addressing Courtney, 'it was you that saved me ! but he is gone for ever—murdered, sir ! murdered ! But I will have justice on the bastard—the base-born child of Clairfait—the offspring of the traitor Dubois !'

The union of these exclamations came like an electric shock to Captain Courtney : a mystic veil was in a moment withdrawn from his eyes as it regarded many circumstances that had transpired, but there were others that were still involved in obscurity and gloom. He had heard Dubois with his own ears when he had declared himself his father ; and though he felt it might be a *ruse* to work upon the kindly sympathies of his nature, yet to doubt was in itself a torture. And now Wentworth (for he knew the afflicted woman could mean no other) was also pro-

nounced to be a child of Dubois. Was that the cause of enmity? and did they have the same mother? were questions that rushed upon Sir Edward's mind. But it will be necessary, before proceeding further, to account for the return of our hero with the wife of Dawes. When he had retired from the scene of blood with Miss Waldegrave, he escorted her up the narrow pathway that led to the summit of the cliff, and their brief conversation was perfectly satisfactory to both, inasmuch as their vows of constancy were renewed, and Caroline had consented to become the wife of Courtney. When about two-thirds up the eminence, a loud scream was heard from beneath, and, looking downwards, they beheld upon a narrow ledge of the cliff, some forty feet in altitude, a woman struggling with a man, who was evidently endeavouring to drag her to the edge of the precipice. Caroline apprised her lover that it was the wife of the murdered Dawes, and a single glance betrayed the person of Wentworth in the assailant. Without an instant's hesitation, he bade Miss Waldegrave farewell, and descended in such haste as to stumble more than once and tear his clothes against the craggy rocks. Wentworth, mad with rage, and desperate in his emergency, had dragged his victim within a few feet of the verge of the precipice; another step, and she would have been hurled over by her more powerful antagonist, when our hero seized the collar of his enemy, and by a sudden jerk brought them both prostrate to the ground, away from the immediate danger. The spot was lonely, and had the villain succeeded in his attempt, her fall would have appeared as the effect of accident, and the perpetrator have escaped detection.

'What! foiled again—and by you!' exclaimed Wentworth, 'You have ever been a viper in my path—you have ever crossed my track, and now'—he sprang at our hero and twined his arms about him—'one of us must here meet his doom!'

The shelving projection on which they stood was not more than twelve feet in breadth by sixteen in length, and the suddenness of Wentworth's attack had hurled Courtney within a small pace of the edge—the slightest yielding further, even a few inches' bending of the body beyond the point of resistance, and his mangled remains would have been extended at the base of the rock. But, recovering from his first surprise, Courtney stood firm, and, being the stronger of the two, he once more flung his adversary from him. Still, Wentworth was not vanquished. Again he darted at Sir Edward, and the two closed in one desperate conflict, as they struggled upon the very brink of an eternity. But Wentworth was growing weak—his maddened rage deprived him of judgment, whilst Courtney was cool and determined. The design of the former seemed to be that one of them should perish; but the latter, although it was in his power, had no intention of destroying his unrelenting adversary. He took him at an advantage, and dashed him on the rocky shelf with a force that prevented his immediate rising; and, assisting the wife of the smuggler, Sir Edward descended the cliff, whilst the vilest and most bitter imprecations of his foe resounded in his ears. At the foot of the cliff they met with Gingerbread Jem, who accompanied them to the cavern, and then the wretched woman became aware that her husband was no more, in the manner that has already been described. To attempt to draw any explanation from her at that moment, our hero saw would be unavailing, as a deeper passion absorbed her faculties, and he deemed it an imperative duty to secure the offending party without delay, that he might be rendered into the hands of justice. Then came his recollections of General Edmonds, and the disgrace that would ensue upon the fair sisters of the murderer; but there were also the words of the smuggler's wife, that he was not Lord Wentworth's son: Who, then, could be his mother? The young man had constantly been looked upon and considered as the legitimate child of Lord Wentworth; the mere babble of a woman's tongue could not overturn it—there must be stronger, more convincing evidence of facts. Harassed and bewildered by conflicting feelings, yet, with the candour that always marked his character, Courtney determined upon an interview with his lordship: he gave directions that the body of Dawes should remain untouched till it had undergone the inspection of a coroner's inquest, and promptly hastened away to execute his design. At the entrance to the grounds of the Pleasance, he found Parker and the coxswain waiting for him. To the former he briefly communicated what had occurred, and, notwithstanding the disarrangement of his dress, they proceeded to the dwelling.

CHAPTER XIX.

'There is a Providence that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them as we will.'

As soon as Captain Wentworth was enabled to walk, he made the best speed he could to the cottage, for the purpose of consulting with Aunt Alicia as to what course it would be best to pursue to meet the crisis that had evidently arrived.

He found her in no very enviable humour, and she heard him detail the events that had occurred with angry impatience. The appearance of Blocks at this critical juncture, however, greatly staggered her. What had taken place with respect to Dawes, might, she thought, have been hushed up (for neither of them were aware of the presence of Waldegrave, nor the change that had taken place in the condition of the recluse), but for the arrival of Blocks, whose determined exertions could alone be prevented by rendering him as helpless as the unfortunate smuggler. Even this she did not despair of doing. 'I have foreseen that your unamiable propensities and revengeful passions would one day be your ruin, Charles,' said she.

'Your croakings are unavailing now,' returned he, impetuously; 'and it is not just to upbraid me for inheriting the evil dispositions of my parents.'

'Rash and insulting boy! this is no time for idle recrimination,' responded the lady, reproachfully. 'You must act with vigour and promptitude; a dark cloud is over you, and only

the lightning's flash can rend it asunder. This very day Caroline is of age, and your contract must be made available. Go to his lordship and demand her hand: that once secured, you may set the frowns of fortune at defiance, come whatever may. Put it to the test at once, and I will support your claim.'

'But what am I to do about this affair of Dawes?' inquired he. 'I fear the evidence of the recluse would go hard against me

'Father Ambrose must be disposed of,' returned Alicia: 'I will undertake to do that. Secure Caroline, and the rest may be accomplished by energetic boldness. Sir Edward Courtney will be here in a very short time; you must use your best efforts to make him your friend. Blocks, you say, was in plain clothes: he probably has quitted the service, perhaps in disgrace. His presence, however, is most inopportune; but there are those who would—ay, and shall keep him quiet! It is a fearful risk, but yet it must be done. Had Dawes lived, the whole might have been sent across the water; but I fear his followers will resent his death too much to seize them now; though gold—gold will do everything, and we must lavish it with no sparing hand.'

'And if Dawes could at this moment stand here before you, he would betray that which you would not care for the world to hear,' answered Wentworth, sharply. 'He upbraided me with it last night,—threatened to expose me to disgrace, and you to infamy. Oh, those taunts—those threats—were like the flames of hell to my heart! and the longer I brooded on them, the more fiercely did they burn. It was this that brought him to his doom. He is silenced for ever; but his wife knows it,—her testimony would be even stronger than his,—she may utter in her distress——'

'—That which I must prevent in its consequences,' returned Alicia: 'ay! and it must be done on the instant too! Send your servant Robert to collect a few of the most trusty hands together: he will know whom to select; let them meet without a moment's loss of time at the Cove. Where did you leave Blocks?'

'He accompanied the wife of Dawes to the cavern,' returned Wentworth, 'and most probably is there now.'

'That would indeed be fortunate!' said Alicia: 'for then we may have the whole at once within our power. Summon all your daring;—the times are becoming desperate, but resolution and fortitude may yet be victorious. The wife of Dawes is the only living witness; there can be no proof that you fired at the man——' A servant entered. 'How now, Robert! you have come just as we were wishing for you. Your master's welfare is somewhat threatened; but I know he may rely on your fidelity and good offices.'

'I have ever been faithful to him, madam,' replied Robert, as he respectfully inclined his head; 'nor shall he on any occasion find me wanting in my duty. I came to inform you that Sir Edward Courtney has arrived and requests an immediate interview with his lordship.'

'Sir Edward Courtney!' reiterated the lady; 'I did not expect him yet. This is a *contretemps*; but we must try and reap advantage from this very circumstance. Robert, you must get eight of the most trusty smugglers together at the Cove within this hour. Father Ambrose is a hypocrite, a cheat! the hermitage must be closely guarded, and no one suffered to come out. In the evening, one of the swiftest boats must be in readiness for Cherbourg. Here is my purse, deal bountifully with them, and be still more extravagant of promises: they shall be defended, protected—their families provided for—but they must execute my commission with secresy and despatch. Can you do all this, Robert?'

'There is no great difficulty in such a task,' replied the man; 'and your former bounty is an earnest of future recompense. It shall be done without an instant of delay.'

'Brave—worthy fellow!' exclaimed the lady; 'the course of nature must soon place Mr. Wentworth in possession of the title and estate, and, believe me, you shall not be forgotten. Haste, then, away! and as you pass the hall, send a servant to the young ladies, saying that I request their immediate presence here. Away, Robert, away! and may success crown your efforts!' The man departed. 'And now, Charles, comes the time for action. Be cool and firm: your countenance has still the traces of angry passion upon it, and there is a look of sickly apprehension that may betray you. Keep Sir Edward close company; amuse him as you best may: I will in person arrange all other proceedings. Come, smile, man! affairs are not so desperate as they seem. Urge your suit with his lordship. He has lived too long, Charles; but that must be seen to: I have perilled soul and body for your welfare, and will not shrink to obtain the prize. Hush! your sisters are coming: assume more placid features—welcome them, even Caroline, with well-affected pleasure: hush! they are here.' The young ladies entered the apartment. 'My dear girls,' said she, 'I have sent for you to welcome the brave young sailor who is now the hero of the day—I mean Sir Edward Courtney. He has just arrived, and I trust you will do your best endeavours to show how dear to British bosoms are those who defend their country.' She turned to the servant: 'Show Sir Edward in.'

The room was spacious, and elegantly furnished with appropriate decorations for a marine villa. It was on the ground-floor; the glazed doors of a circular projection, opening on a delightful lawn that gradually sloped down, not on an inclined plane, but with a hilly swell that rendered the descent invisible beyond a certain point, and leaving in sight no other land between it and the prospect of the sea. The tasteful draperies—the exquisite paintings in their gorgeous frames,—in fact, the whole was calculated to enchant the senses of a novice; though they were considered as little more than commonplace by those who were constantly viewing them. Caroline had nerved herself for the interview. She knew what was to occur; and though she had strenuously tried to come prepared, still it was impossible not to feel agitated as she heard

the approaching footsteps. Aunt Alicia had assumed her sweetest smiles; the sisters could not be indifferent to the fame of Courtney, which had been so loudly extolled; and Wentworth expecting, if not an auxiliary, at least a friend, advanced as the door opened to meet his brother officer with extended hand. But who can describe the instantaneous change that ensued when our hero and Parker stood palpably before them, both in deep black, though the habiliments of the former had met with but rough usage. Rage, hate, malice,—every vile passion of the human heart was aroused in the breast of Wentworth and Aunt Alicia as Courtney politely bowed, and introduced his friend Parker, who was immediately recognised by his old tormentor. 'This is a double insult!' exclaimed the latter, 'and shall meet with deserved punishment! Scoundrels, both of you! which has dared to take upon himself the title of a brave man for the purpose of imposition? Call up the servants, and place these rascals in confinement till they can be escorted to the gaol, or kept in custody till Sir Edward's arrival.'

Courtney gave the young man a look of ineffable contempt as he uttered, 'Under this roof, sir, and in the presence of these ladies, you are for the present safe from my just indignation: but do not try my patience too far; there are bounds to human endurance, and when urged too closely, irritation may overstep them.' He turned towards Alicia: 'With your permission, madam, I would have an immediate interview with his lordship.'

'It cannot be,' replied Alicia haughtily, although her mind was almost overpowered by agitation: 'Lord Wentworth is too ill to be disturbed by such adventurers.' The servants came thronging in, and she peremptorily exclaimed, 'Seize upon these fellows! they have come under false names perhaps to rob the house! Bind them neck and foot, and guard them in the stable till the real Sir Edward appears:—Or, stop! let them be conveyed to the garden-house, and lock them safely in: if they attempt to escape, the consequences be upon their own heads!' and a demoniac smile of exultation triumphed upon her brow as a hope crossed her mind that Blocks was now within her power.

The servants prepared to obey. Courtney and Parker stood calmly but firmly on the defensive as the men advanced; whilst Caroline attempted to run towards her lover, but was restrained by Alicia. The servants rushed upon the officers, who felled the leaders to the floor; but the numbers were so unequal, that resistance seemed futile, and they were nearly subdued, when in sprang Bill Sykes with his trusty oak-stick, and laying about him right and left with the strength of a giant, he shouted, ''Ware hawse, ye lubbers! is that the way ye board a friend, ye infarnal pirates! I'm blowed if you arn't worse than Algerines!'

Wentworth felt for his dirk, but the scabbard alone remained. The coxswain saw the act and guessed its intent. 'And you, ye picarooning wagabone!' uttered he to the officer, 'if it warn't for the colour of the cloth which I honours, d—— me, but I'd freshen your memory with the devil to you!—though mayhap you arn't never quite forgot ould Bill!'

'I have not forgotten you, my man,' replied Wentworth, taking care to preserve a safe distance from the coxswain's fingers,—'I have not forgotten you, as a court-martial shall shortly testify.'

'A d—— for your court-martial!' shouted the enraged coxswain, snapping his fingers in contempt: 'do you think I'd stand by and see my skipper man-handled arter that ere fashion?'

'Avast, Bill!' said Courtney, the servants having retired together and formed into a body ready to renew the attack; 'your zeal, my good fellow, carries you beyond the bounds of discretion. You may, however, just enlighten this lady,' bowing to Alicia, 'as to who I really am.'

'Why, yourself, to be sure—your honour's own self, and be d—— to the wagaboning lick-dishes!' returned the coxswain, fully satisfied that he had satisfactorily explained everything; but observing the menacing attitude of the servants, he flourished his oak-stick, and shouting, 'Boarders, away!' made a sudden spring towards them. Painful recollections of his prowess, together with the sight of the formidable weapon in the hands of Bill Sykes, at once decided the business. Away scampered the servants, acting upon the principle of human nature, that self is the first law, and totally regardless of the reproaches of their mistress, or the commands of Captain Wentworth,—in fact, regardless of everything except their own safety. Having achieved this exploit, the coxswain quietly took his station at the door to prevent all further intrusion; but two of the beaten party who had not been able to make their escape so readily as the others, limped towards him and requested egress.

'Have you struck, ye lubbers?' asked Bill, as he raised his instrument of castigation, and poised it in a seeming playful, but significant manner.

'No, muster sailor,' returned one of the suppliants, who felt awed by the formidable appearance of the veteran, and imagined him to be asking whether he had struck a blow in the affray.

'It's best you do, then, you know-nothing, or I'm blessed if Casey shan't whisper a word in your ear!' said the coxswain, shaking his stick.

'Who am I to strike?' asked the man, looking first at his master, then at his fellow-servant, and glancing an eye at the cudgel.

'Strike, I say!' shouted Bill, raising his weapon in a threatening attitude,—'strike! or I'm blow'd if I don't lay you as dead as King Dollyme in Egypt!'

'Well, if I must, here goes!' said the man, and giving his fellow-servant a severe blow, he tumbled forward headlong out of the door.

'All right, my hearty!' exclaimed Bill, with a self-satisfied and business-like grin; 'an enemy's a friend when he fights your battles. But I say, shipmates, you arn't never got such a thing as a bite o' pigtail to gi'e me, seeing as I lost my 'bacca-box when I skied the edge upon that ere hanimal?'

Whilst this petit interlude was carrying on,

Courtney addressed the ladies. 'To you, Miss Waldegrave, I am at least no stranger; I am more proud of the distinction than of all the honours conferred upon me by my sovereign. To you, Miss Wentworth, my conduct may appear strange; but I do trust that coming events will exonerate me. I *was* the poor foundling Blocks, rescued from the perils of the ocean that beset me even in infancy. It was in this character you first knew me; but circumstances since then induced me to change my name for that of a second kind foster-parent.'—Alicia drew a convulsive respiration. 'I was appointed second lieutenant of the *Tulip*, under Captain Rogerson, who fell bravely fighting for the honour of his country. The command subsequently devolved on me,—my good fortune prevailed, and I am now——'

'—Sir Edward Courtney,' added Miss Waldegrave, proudly, as she walked towards our hero; Aunt Alicia being unable through trepidation to prevent the junction: indeed, this last blow to Alicia's hopes came so sudden and unexpectedly, that it almost overwhelmed her. 'Yes, Sir Edward,' continued Caroline, 'I for one am well acquainted with your title, and without hesitation acknowledge with gratification the worth of him who bears it,'

'Noble and generous lady!' said Sir Edward, as he took her passive hand, 'my future days shall best testify how highly I value this demonstration of your favour.'

'Avast, Sir Edward!—if such is indeed your title,' said Wentworth; 'that lady is mine by previous contract—either she or her fortune.'

'Perish the money!' exclaimed Courtney, giving Wentworth a look of scorn; 'it is sincere affection that my heart desires, and I trust—nay, I am convinced I shall find it here. But do not think, sir, that you shall plunder Miss Waldegrave at your pleasure.'

'Plunder!' vociferated the other, impetuously; 'I scorn the imputation: it will be mine by legal right—a written contract signed and sealed by our mutual parents.'

'There is a saving clause in the conditions,' said Major Waldegrave, as he entered the room, being recognised by Bill Sykes, who immediately admitted him; 'that is, should either father subsequently disapprove.'

'How, fellow! who are you who dare thus intrude yourself?' demanded Wentworth, haughtily, though the appearance and dress of the major excited a feeling of superstitious awe. 'What can you know of this contract?—the father of Miss Waldegrave is——'

'—Here before you, sir,' uttered the major, proudly; and bowing to Sir Edward, he threw off his disguise. 'I am somewhat altered, Miss Alicia, since the days of lighter dalliance and deception.' The colour of the lady forsook her cheeks, which became ashy pale as she gazed upon him. 'The grave your unhallowed love provided for me yawned fearfully for its prey; but the victim escaped. Surely you cannot have totally forgotten Major Waldegrave?'

'My father!' exclaimed Caroline, approaching Waldegrave, and, falling on her knees, she clung to him. 'Oh, can it indeed be possible? Am I, then, not an orphan, and alone in the world?'

'No, my child,' returned the major, fondly raising her to his embrace; 'you are no longer at the mercy of those who would abuse their trust.'

Alicia gazed intently on the features of the intruder; her eye-balls seemed to be almost starting from their sockets; but those features were greatly altered to the remembrance of meretricious passion, though the true affection of the wife had immediately discovered them. 'The whole is imposition,' said she, hurriedly; 'Major Waldegrave is in eternity.'

'He has much to be repentant for, before he meets his Maker,' returned Waldegrave. 'Captivity and privation, with what is worse, a continued anguish of mind, may have strangely altered me. Happily, this brave young man, Sir Edward Courtney, has restored me to my native land; the murdered Dawes, before he expired, fully recognised me: but I have ample evidence of my identity; though, should all fail, here is one witness whose testimony is worth the whole.' He beckoned with his hand; the recluse stood at his side, and, throwing off the garments of concealment, appeared in female attire. 'Caroline,' said the major, taking her hand, 'your mother.'

Nothing could exceed the astonishment which this presentation produced; though in the breasts of Alicia and Wentworth it was mingled with that extreme of terror which guilt generally inspires. 'Am I to endure all this? under my father's roof, too?' exclaimed the fear-stricken Wentworth. 'If you are Major Waldegrave—'

'I am, sir,' returned the major, with strong feeling, as Caroline embraced her mother. 'Yes, I am he,—restored to my wife and child—restored to my native land——'

'—To suffer the vengeance of its laws!' shrieked Alicia, who had now recalled the manner of the man as well as his person to her remembrance. 'Waldegrave, you are a murderer!'

'No—no, Miss Alicia,' returned the major, with peculiar emphasis; 'Colonel C—— died by the assassin's knife, and not by my sword' (he hazarded a conjecture founded on what had been uttered by the wife of the smuggler, as well as by the smuggler himself);—'by the knife of your friend and intimate—the villain Clairfait——'

'The traitor Dubois,' uttered our hero, taking up the thread as if by inspiration: 'the father of yon miscreant!' pointing to Wentworth, 'who has been imposed upon Lord Wentworth as his son.'

A wild, piercing shriek rang through the room;—the pallid hue of death overspread the features of Alicia as she sank insensible upon the floor. Wentworth stood for a few seconds trembling with aguish terror; and then, suddenly springing away, he darted through the glazed doorway on to the lawn, where he was instantly seized by Gingerbread Jem and several other persons, and brought back to the room. But how much was the astonishment of our hero excited when, in the persons thus introduced, he recognised his generous benefactor, Will Blocks, Lawyer Brief, and Sir Joseph Breeze!

'What cheer, Ten, what cheer?' exclaimed

the gunner, joyfully. 'It's all right at last, my hearty! all square by the lifts and braces: I know'd it would be so some time or another. Why don't you speak, Muster Brief, and tell him on it?'

'Ah, why don't you overhaul the consarn all reg'lar and ship-shape?' said the veteran Breeze, as he grasped Sir Edward's hand and shook it heartily. 'Brother knights now! eh! my boy? and yet you'll top the officer over me by-and-by, Ten! Come, Muster Brief, pay out the slack of that 'ere speech I made!—why, you're as long in stays as the Merry Don of Dover!'

'Patience, gentlemen, patience!' said the man of the law calmly, and drawing from his pocket a packet of papers very neatly tied up with red tape; 'you had better let the lady recover first. Sir Edward, will you be pleased to ring the bell and order the servants to attend?'

'I am not master here, sir,' returned our hero respectfully; 'nevertheless, I will do what you request by summoning them.'

'But you are master here!' exclaimed old Joe, as if bent to communicate something of importance. 'Why don't you out with it at once, Brief, and let all hands know who's who? Arn't you got the confession and the proof, and all the rest of the dockments? D—— it! I do hate to see a man slack in sarving out good news!'

'All right,' chimed in the gunner; 'he took the consarn in charge. Why can't you tell Ten at once that he's now under his own father's roof?'

A paleness overspread the young man's features; for amidst the surprises he had that day experienced, this to him was the most important and extraordinary; he looked from one to another in almost bewildered amazement. The countenances of his three old friends were redolent with gratification; the face of Wentworth was convulsed with terror; the sisters stood the pictures of mute astonishment; whilst Major Waldegrave, who had been looking with fondness upon his wife and daughter, turned with breathless attention to catch the sequel, and Caroline bent her keen gaze upon our hero as if fearful that something terrible was about to divide them for ever. Ten-thousand approached the little lawyer as if to address him, but he could not find utterance for the inquiry he wished to make: he stretched forth his hands imploringly.

'Good!' ejaculated Brief; 'the appeal is understood; but see, the lady recovers—hush!' He pulled his spectacles to their proper adjustment and fixed his keen eyes upon Alicia, who rose slowly up, parted the hair from her forehead, and glared wildly around at the increased number of persons. 'Good!—hew!—haw!—just as I expected—none other than Lady Hortensia Sinclair.' The lawyer bowed stiffly. 'Lady Hortensia, I am your humble servant—my name is Brief, and now I will proceed. Sir Edward, your friends have told you the truth; here are the documents,' holding up the papers, 'that will prove you to be the real son and heir of Lord Wentworth; here is the confession of one Dubois, alias Clairfait——'

'The villain!' shrieked Alicia; 'the hardened—desperate villain!—the wilful murderer!—the savage!'

'Rather, Lady Hortensia, the repentant sinner!' said Brief. 'Here, however, is his confession of a life of guilt; and I have also incontestable evidence to show that the person now calling himself the Honourable Mr. Wentworth is the illegitimate offspring——'

'Hush!—say no more; for the love of Heaven, say no more!' exclaimed Alicia in a tone of entreaty: 'the servants are entering. Can it not be arranged in private?—must everything meet with public exposure?'

'Much depends upon yourself, madam,' returned Brief. 'I have quite enough to substantiate my claims without any admissions on your part; though a candid confession might save us some trouble.'

'The hand of inscrutable Providence does indeed appear manifest here,' said the major; 'these are wonderful interpositions: but should not his lordship be apprised of what is taking place?'

'I fear it would be useless,' said Caroline; 'his lordship has been suffered to sink into a state bordering on imbecility of mind.'

'But still it is our duty to give him such information as it is possible for him to receive,' observed the lawyer.

'Send away the servants,' entreated Alicia, overcome by the weight of her own convictions that further subterfuge would only bring heavier misery.

'I cannot consent to it,' said the unrelenting lawyer: 'the injuries have been great and manifold—the reparation must be open and undisguised.'

'May I presume,' urged our hero, 'to request that the lady's wishes for the removal of the servants may be complied with? God knows what my heart at this moment feels, and how ardently I long to receive the blessings of a parent! yet I would restrain my own desires for the sake of humanity. The presence of the servants is not absolutely necessary; besides, as it is a family matter, we should spare his lordship as much as possible.'

'Morally you are right—legally you are wrong,' returned Brief. 'I would have a cloud of witnesses: but I leave it in your hands, Sir Edward. You have been cruelly—brutally—treated by them!'

'Well, then, the first use I make of my power is to order the servants out,' said Ten-thousand, which he accordingly did; and then, approaching Amelia and Ann, he extended his hands as he uttered, 'This seems to me a delightful dream, from which I fear to awake. Oh! how often has my heart thrilled with a holy affection towards you! how often have I pictured to myself the delight of having such sisters! Can it indeed be real? Oh, I fear, I fear'—and he pressed his open palms upon his forehead—'I fear it cannot all be true!'

'Howld heart, Ten!' uttered the watchful gunner, as apprehensions of a former malady crossed his memory; 'Muster Brief will give you the calkelations of the consarn presently. You see it ull all come out ship-shape—won't it, Joe?—Sir Joseph, I means.'

'To be sure it wool,' responded Breeze; 'and

it might have been all clear now, if Brief would ounly have veered away upon my speech.'

Lord Wentworth was apprised by Amelia that his presence was required in the parlour, and she returned to say that it would not be long before he made his appearance.

'May I not be allowed to withdraw?' asked Alicia; 'and pray what is your intention with respect to yon tremblihg—— Yet, hold!—nature —O God! what has it not already made me!'

'Why I am detained here,' said the fictitious Wentworth, 'is best known to those who have seized me. What crime can they allege against me? what law of my country have I broken? You have as yet adduced no proofs of what you assert; I demand to be set at liberty!'

'Crime!' ejaculated Gingerbread Jem. 'Well I'm blessed, captain, if you don't bang impudence out and out! Why, who murdered Petitoes?' A scowl passed over the young man's features. 'Ah, you may look black!—but,' pulling the weapon from beneath his long frock, 'here's your own rifle, picked up at the very spot from which the shot was fired, and ——'

'Where is the wretch?' shrieked a female voice outside upon the lawn, and the next instant Mrs. Dawes rushed through the open doorway. 'Justice—justice—let me have justice on the base-born bastard.'

'Fresh evidence,' muttered Brief as he pulled down his spectacles, and with pencil and paper prepared to take notes.

The wretched woman looked round upon the persons assembled; her eyes rested for some time on the major and his wife—confused remembrances came like dim shadows over her mind so as to bewilder her faculties, but the sight of Acheson again aroused her. 'There stands the murderer!' shrieked she. 'My arms were the first that received him at his birth.' Brief scribbled away. 'It was in my cottage he drew his first breath. Speak, Miss Alicia, speak! It is you who have encouraged him in evil deeds —you! his mother.'—('Corroborative,' muttered the lawyer.) 'And he is the offspring of the villain Clairfait, whose knife killed the colonel! Unsay it, if you can—deny it, if you dare!'

'I am fixed to the stake,' said Alicia, despondingly, 'and must endure the torture!—Woman! have you no feeling for one of your own sex?'

'Who has had any feeling for me? responded Mrs. Dawes. 'Am I not bereaved of a kind and good husband by the hand of him who calls you mother—the son of the spy Clairfait? But it has come home to me! I changed the children, and it has come home to me!'

'You perhaps did right to change the children,' said Brief in smooth accents, for he judged correctly, that by soothing her irritated feelings he was most likely to obtain the information that he sought for.

'Oh, no, no!' exclaimed the woman. 'It was done in wickedness of heart: I own it was. I nursed both mothers, and one died. Yet, oh! 'twas she,' pointing to Alicia, 'that made me do it!'

'Of course the other child did not outlive its mother?' said Brief, inquiringly.

'Well, now, if this arn't backing and filling to no manner of purpose,' said the gunner, who did not understand why the lawyer should be asking questions about a subject with which he was already perfectly well acquainted.

'Let him shape his own course, Will,' remonstrated Breeze in a whisper to his friend; 'he's arter working to wind'ard of the enemy according to the tick-tacks of the law.'

'Rest easy, gentlemen, rest easy,' said Brief, looking at them significantly; 'this good woman has quite enough to distress her mind without any aggravation on our parts:' then turning to Mrs. Dawes, he again took up the thread of his examination. 'If the other child died with its mother, as most probably it did, there possibly has been no very great harm done after all.'

'But there *was* great harm done!' returned the woman in the irritated spirit of contradiction, and earnestly desirous of vilifying her former coadjutors. 'The child lived, though Mrs. Acheson died.'

'Oh! it was the daughter of Mrs. Acheson then—of the present Lord Wentworth, whose place was supplied by yonder young man?' continued Brief, poising his pen playfully, and looking somewhat confused. 'It is strange the difference of sexes should not be discovered.'

'You must all be stupid!' said the woman angrily, and forgetting her sorrows in the mortification of not being clearly understood. 'It was not a girl at all!—it was a fine boy.'

'Good!' ejaculated Brief, and his pen flew rapidly over the paper, producing on its surface what might have been taken at a distance for forked lightning. 'It was a boy! and you had it to nurse?'

'No,' replied Mrs. Dawes; 'it was taken away soon after its birth by Clairfait, and I never saw it again; though Dawes once told me it was still living, but he would not trust me further.'

'My good woman,' said Sir Edward, much agitated, and unable to repress his emotion, 'you have revealed strange truths. What became of the other child you mention?'

'I know not what became of it,' responded she: 'it was sent away, and, I was told, put out to nurse somewhere in Cornwall, or that way.'

'You need question her no further, Sir Edward,' said Brief. 'That very woman to whom you were put to nurse is now in Portsmouth; and it was Dubois, alias Clairfait, who launched you on the waters to perish. I have it all here;' and again he held up his red-taped papers. 'You are that very child that this good woman nursed.'

'Where—where?' demanded the widow Dawes. 'Is it this gentleman?' turning to Ten-thousand. 'Oh, forgive, forgive me! I was a wicked woman for doing what I did!—but it was they who made me do it, and Dawes got the gowld.'

'You wish to be forgiven yourself, and yet cannot extend your forgiveness to others,' said our hero. 'That man has deeply injured me; but I can pardon him.'

'He neither wishes nor cares for your forgiveness,' exclaimed the fictitious Wentworth

doggedly : 'the die is cast, and he sets you all at defiance !'

At this moment, Lord Wentworth, supported by a servant on each side, entered the room, and his vacant gaze but too plainly told his mental weakness. As soon as he was seated, our hero walked up to him and took his hand, whilst his heart was overflowing with filial regard ; but Mrs. Dawes at that moment threw herself on her knees before him, and, convulsively sobbing, exclaimed. 'You are a magistrate, my lord !—send him to prison !—he is not your son, and he has murdered my husband !'

'What—what is all this ?' feebly inquired his lordship. 'To what cause, gentlemen, am I indebted for this visit ?'—He looked at the supposed Captain Wentworth. 'Why do you stand there, Charles ? Who are all these ?'

'They have thought fit to make me a prisoner, my lord,' uttered the other. 'They have trumped up charges against me affecting my life.'

'Peace, Charles ! peace !' exclaimed Alicia, who was fully sensible of the utter inutility of attempting to brave the storm, and hoped by timely concession to bend before its fury without being wholly rooted out. She approached to the side of Brief. 'To you, sir, I would communicate what I have to say. Suffer me and this unhappy man to retire whilst you explain things to his lordship—our presence cannot be necessary.'

Brief looked to his client, who nodded assent ; and the lawyer, calling to him Bill Sykes and Gingerbread Jem, accompanied the mother and son into another apartment upstairs, placing the smuggler and the seaman at the door as sentinels. He then returned and endeavoured to impart to Lord Wentworth the events that had occurred ; but his lordship could not comprehend them.

Deep was the distress of Ten-Thousand to perceive that his parent recoiled from him in alarm. Neither the major nor Mrs. Waldegrave was recognised ; and the poor hypochondriac seemed to labour under that species of terror with which children would view a phantasmagoria. His daughter also endeavoured to make him understand what was passing ; the major and Mrs. Waldegrave lent their aid ; but the distressed man was too much bewildered to connect his ideas together, and it was evident he laboured under extreme alarm. Some time had elapsed in fruitless efforts to awaken his dormant energies, when Bill Sykes ran into the room, exclaiming, 'Jumped out at the port ! make sail in chase, ahoy !' And he darted through the open glazed doorway.

Ten-thousand, with Parker, the major, Joe Breeze, and the gunner, instantly followed ; but they had not far to go, for beneath the window of the room in which the lawyer had confined Alicia and her son lay the latter writhing in anguish, whilst the tattered shreds of curtains fluttered midway between the window-sill and the stone terrace that ran along that side of the house. He had tried to escape by twisting the curtains ; they would not bear his weight—he fell with considerable violence, and a broken leg and a dislocated hip were the result.

By the side of the prostrate man, and supporting his head, was poor Lucy in an agony of grief. Parker knew her at once, and would have torn her away, but was restrained by his friend, who, though unacquainted with her person, saw how useless it would be to aggravate her sorrow.

'It is my sister, Sir Edward !' exclaimed Parker, as he struggled to disengage himself from the hold of our hero. 'Why she is here is to me a mystery—Lucy, what does all this mean ?'

The poor girl gazed upon him, and her look and tears betrayed the severe suffering of her heart ; but she was too overwhelmed with shame and grief to speak, though an appeal was on her tongue. Bill Sykes, respectfully uncovering his head, knelt by her side, and whispered words of comfort in her ear, and then addressing his superior, said 'Mayhap, yer honour 'ull forgive ould Bill for displaining everything all about it by-and-by.'

'How can you know of the matter, Sykes ?' inquired Parker, surprised that the coxswain should be in any way mixed up with the affair. 'You can never have seen each other before ?'

'But we have, yer honour,' said Bill ; 'and that's the way I lost my bacca-box.' Then turning to Lucy, the honest fellow kindly uttered, 'The squall 'ull blow over presently, my lady : he's got too good a heart to harbour animosity in it long. But let me relieve you of this here weight ;' and the seaman took her place in supporting the mangled man as he lay groaning with agony. 'You're hove down, sir, now—laid on your beam-ends,' said Bill, as he composed the limbs of the shattered being, so as to cause his position to be less painful : 'not as I'm saying it illnatur'dly or onkindly, but ownly just to ax you not to die angry with me for overhauling a little slack jaw a bit ago, seeing as it was done in the way of duty. I'm sure I heartily forgives you all the harm as ever you've done me in your life, and may God A'mighty follow my example.'

Ten-thousand spoke soothingly and encouragingly to Lucy, for her brother still kept aloof, whilst the impostor looked at Parker with the hate of a demon as he uttered 'I care not for pain ! she is dishonoured ! I shall be revenged upon one of you at least ! She will become a mother without being a wife !'

'You are mistaken, sir,' exclaimed the immediate servant of the unhappy man, and who had been the agent in many of his bad actions.

'How ? What is this, Robert ?' demanded the agitated master ; 'surely you, on whom I so much relied, cannot have betrayed me ?'

'I admit, sir, my motives were not good,' replied the man. 'I wished to have you in my power : still, there were compunctious visitings when ordered to deceive one into ruin who was so young—so innocent, and so confiding. She is your lawfully-wedded wife ; for the person who married you was a regular clergyman of the Church of England, and I have the certificate by me at this moment.'

'Ha—ha ! overreached again !' yelled the

writhing wretch, as he threw the poor girl from him. 'Now may curses alight upon you all! Oh! how gladly would I resign existence to have only one half-hour's enjoyment of revenge!'

Parker approached his distressed sister, all his tenderness reviving at the glad intelligence that, however she had degraded herself by associating with such a villain (alas! he knew not the arts that had been used to entrap her), she was not the disgraced and debased being that his enemy proclaimed her. The wretched man was raised and carried into the house, where, in spite of all his brutality and harshness, Lucy attended him. As for Aunt Alicia, she was found on the floor of the apartment a livid and bloated corpse: strong poison had soon performed its work, and the woman who for years had been a stranger to peace of conscience, or joy of heart, rushed with all her unatoned-for guilt upon her head to hear the condemnation of the Great Judge, 'Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire!' thus sealing her misery through a boundless eternity. Nor did her unhappy son long survive her; though a change took place previous to his dissolution through the unremitting assiduity of his still fondly-attached wife. Dread of future punishment, however, it is to be feared, wrought more powerfully upon his heart than repentance for past misdeeds. His marriage with Lucy was fully proved, and what little wealth he had was bequeathed to her, which, with her pension as the widow of a naval master and commander, and the assistance of her brother, was adequate to her humble wants. The affair of the murdered Dawes could not be hushed up. An officer of police was constantly on the watch for his recovery; and had it been practicable to remove him, he would have been consigned to the walls of a gaol. As it was, death removed him from the terrors of earthly justice to carry him before the unerring tribunal of Omnipotence. He died forgiven by those he had injured; but his last moments were terrible to witness. And now for a few explanations to account for the appearance of Breeze, Brief, and the gunner. Previous to Ten-thousand's return to Portsmouth from the metropolis after presentation to the King, Captain Yorick had completed his refit and gone round to Plymouth, where the *Diamond* frigate, commanded by the gallant Sir Sydney Smith, had just arrived from the Mediterranean; and Captain Yorick went on board her to renew an old friendship with this noted man. He descended into the cabin, and found Sir Sydney and his surgeon carefully attending three wounded individuals who were suspended in cots.

'Blessed are the merciful, for they shall find mercy!' said Yorick. 'You are generously employed, Sidney. Pray, may I ask who are the sufferers?'

'They are French officers,' replied Sir Sidney. 'Poor fellows! though I detest the nation, I cannot avoid feeling that they are men and enemies.'

'Taken in action, I suppose?' said Yorick. 'I never heard of your having a brush with anything on your passage home.'

'No; they were not taken in action by me,' answered Sir Sidney. 'After the evacuation of Alexandria, the prisoners were sent away in different vessels for France. I fell in with one of them, a brig in a sinking state, and took out her crew and several officers, amongst whom were those you now see lying here. On our arrival they were not in a condition to be removed, and of course they have remained. One of them commanded a large frigate that was cut out by a protégé of yours—young Blocks, or rather Courtney: he is going fast, and the doctor says he cannot survive many hours.'

'Which is he?' asked Yorick, as a deep groan issued from the cot nearest to him; and turning quickly round, he beheld features which, though pale and haggard, were too strongly impressed upon his retentive memory to be easily forgotten—it was Dubois. 'Is this the man?' inquired Yorick, with an indignation he could not at the moment repress. Sir Sidney bowed. 'Then you have in that cot a villain and a traitor, and, short as his hours may be, justice must receive its due. He is an Englishman!'

'Mercy, Captain Yorick, mercy!' feebly entreated the wretched prisoner. 'I am dying, and yet I dare not die!'

Yorick's ready genius immediately conceived the probability of inducing Dubois to reveal all he knew relative to Ten-thousand and Acheson. 'You have been a sad rascal, it must be owned,' said he, 'but let your last act be an act of justice, so may you find mercy hereafter. Doctor, how long has he got to live?'

'It cannot be more than six or seven hours at the most,' returned the surgeon. 'There is a break-up of the whole system.'

'Well, then, Dubois, it is best to be plain and candid with you,' said Yorick; whilst Sir Sidney stood by, a rather amazed listener. 'If you don't inform us who that young man Blocks really is,—if you don't answer truly to the questions that may be put to you,—why, as sure as you are now able to do it, so surely will you be in —— at the expiration of the time mentioned. Unburthen your mind, man: throw the heavy weight of guilt from your soul.'

'I will—I will,' feebly assented Dubois, 'I have longed to do it, yet could not make up my mind: your presence has determined me, and I am ready.'

'Avast! avast!' said Yorick, smartly. 'Sidney, have you any objections to my sending for my gunner here? he it was who picked up young Blocks and provided for him; he ought to hear this man's confession. May I take the liberty of sending for him?'

'Most certainly,' answered Sir Sidney; 'and it would be as well to have my clerk down to receive the depositions.'

Yorick instantly despatched his boat to the frigate; but the gunner had gone on leave, being desirous of communicating to Breeze and Brief the success of Ten-thousand. Thither the messenger followed him; and in little more than an hour the boat returned, not with the gunner alone, but with all three; and Sir Sidney's sanction being obtained, Sir Joseph, old Will, and the lawyer descended to the cabin. Brief had

brought with him the articles Ten was dressed in when found; and placing the bundle on the cabin-table, he took his seat, mounted his glasses, and prepared for writing.

'Your patient is in sane mind, doctor, though injured in body?' uttered the lawyer, inquiringly. The surgeon bowed.

'Yes, yes,' said Dubois: 'except the horrors that are upon me, I am perfectly sensible: let me lose no time.'

'I am quite ready,' said Brief; 'but it must be done on oath.' He applied himself to his pen and muttered as he wrote, 'Being of sane mind, and with a prospect of death, maketh oath—' He then administered the proper form, which Dubois unhesitatingly complied with. 'And now, first, who is the person you have repeatedly seen under the name of Blocks?'

'He is the son of Lord Wentworth,' replied the dying man, 'surreptitiously taken away and exchanged for him who now usurps his place. I aided in the fraud, and carried the infant into Cornwall, where it was placed out at nurse; but——'

'The name of the person, and the place where,' demanded Brief; 'the date of the removal and the cause?'

'The name was Tremenhere, in Mevagissey,' answered Dubois. He then proceeded to detail every circumstance connected with his taking the infant from the nurse, bringing it to Plymouth, hiring the boat, and launching it upon the waters; his discovery, when captured by the *Scratchee*, that Blocks was the individual infant that had been thus abandoned—in short, he entered most freely and fully upon a confession that at once placed our hero in his proper position: but he persisted in refusing to say who or what the imposter was who had so long usurped Ten-thousand's place. The fact, however, was pretty strongly conjectured. Sir Sidney and Captain Yorick attested the confession; the clothes, the ring, were all identified; and the life of the wretched man terminated about the period the surgeon had predicted.

Brief lost not a moment in posting it to Mevagissey, where he found the nurse still living, and brought her back with him to Plymouth. In the meantime, Breeze had discovered the owner of the hired boat, and, together with the gunner (to whom Yorick gave leave of absence), the whole started for Portsmouth, where finding on their arrival that the captain of the *Tulip* had crossed over to the Isle of Wight, they immediately followed, and arrived at the particular and important moment already described. The Misses Wentworth, after perusing the documents, at once more cordially and most gratefully acknowledged their brother, who sent off an express to General Edmonds, acquainting him with what had taken place at the Pleasance, and respectfully entreating his presence. The veteran's travelling carriage was promptly ordered, and attended by the corporal: he admitted of no delay, and soon arrived upon the scene of action. His efforts, however, to arouse the unhappy peer from his moody melancholy were unavailing, and therefore he took it upon himself to arrange every matter, so that full and ample justice might be done to his sister's child, as no doubt whatever could exist with regard to the relationship. Never was little man more busy in this world of litigation than Lawyer Brief: he allowed himself no rest till all his points were fully and perfectly carried, and his client's claims placed beyond all moral and legal disputation.

Captain Courtney was apprised of every circumstance that had occurred: but he declared his intention of bequeathing the whole of his property to Ten-thousand, simply expressing a wish that he would couple the name of Courtney to that of Wentworth; and through Brief's active agency this was speedily arranged, our hero, through royal permission, taking the title of the Honourable Sir Courtney Wentworth. From what has already been stated, it will cause no surprise to hear that the outlawry against Major Waldegrave was annulled, and he was restored to his estates and station in society. But it was not accomplished without difficulty, for the breach of martial discipline was strong against him still. Brief (who seemed to be the factotum) overcame every obstacle; for several weeks he scarcely ever entered a bed, but slept in the carriage whilst posting it between Portsmouth and the metropolis, and at last was signally successful: in fact, the property had been secured to his daughter, and it was only the resumption that was objected to. We must leave the dead to be borne to the silent earth whilst we form a *tableau vivant* (I am not sure that I am right in the term) of those who remain.

The gunner, through the interest of his protegé, was soon afterwards appointed to one of the royal yachts, for he would not quit the service he loved. Mr. Hector had become attached to his villagers, and though Sir Courtney visited him personally and offered him an excellent living in the gift of the family, he preferred remaining where he was, and he was no advocate for preaching the Gospel by deputy:—in the most delicate manner possible, ample provision was made to supply his every want. Major Edmonds returned from the East Indies, and Amelia became his wife on the very day that Sir Courtney was wedded to Miss Waldegrave, Mr. Hector joining the hands of both couples.

Sir Joseph Breeze, as he himself expressed it, 'had neither chick nor child in the world;' and being in the metropolis on business, the veteran gunner and he met as old friends to discuss the matter.

'All I can muster in the whole univarse,' said Blocks, 'shall go to Ten's childer, except a bit of a *leg* I means to give Captain Parker.'

'He desarves it!' exclaimed Sir Joseph; 'and so my ould 'oman, her ladyship, will say. Well, I'm thinking my fortun' ull go somewhere away upon the same tack; and as they have been laying me alongside somut about *small arms* and *bearings* from a college as they calls the Herald, why, I've been overhauling it in my mind, that, to log the thing down properly, we

ought to make out a tropics of war* for ourselves And here,' producing a rough piece of paper on which he had pencilled a perfect Chinese puzzle to the Heralds' College, but which a seaman would have understood in a moment—'And here is a coat-of-arms, that if he gets my property, he must put into the quarter-bill along with his own.'

* It was a customary thing on board of men-of-war to paint the emblems of war on various parts of the ship, such as the front of the poop, the ends of the booms, and the cloth which covered the main-topmast staysail. These were called by the seamen, not 'the trophies of war,' but 'the tropics of war.'

'You must speak him easy, my ould friend,' said the gunner. 'Ax him, and he'll do it directly to 'blige you: tell him he must, and I am sure he won't!'

'Why, look at it,' urged Sir Joseph, holding up the paper and pointing out the different articles as he enumerated them. 'There's the call, guv me by General Elliot at Gibraltar, rampagerous, as they says at the College—you see I knows all about the tarms—there's a babby proper, and a twenty-four pounder, guarding—and there's a TOPSAIL SHEET BLOCK *cushioned*.'

THE END.

Stirling, July 1885.

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